

THE Atlantic

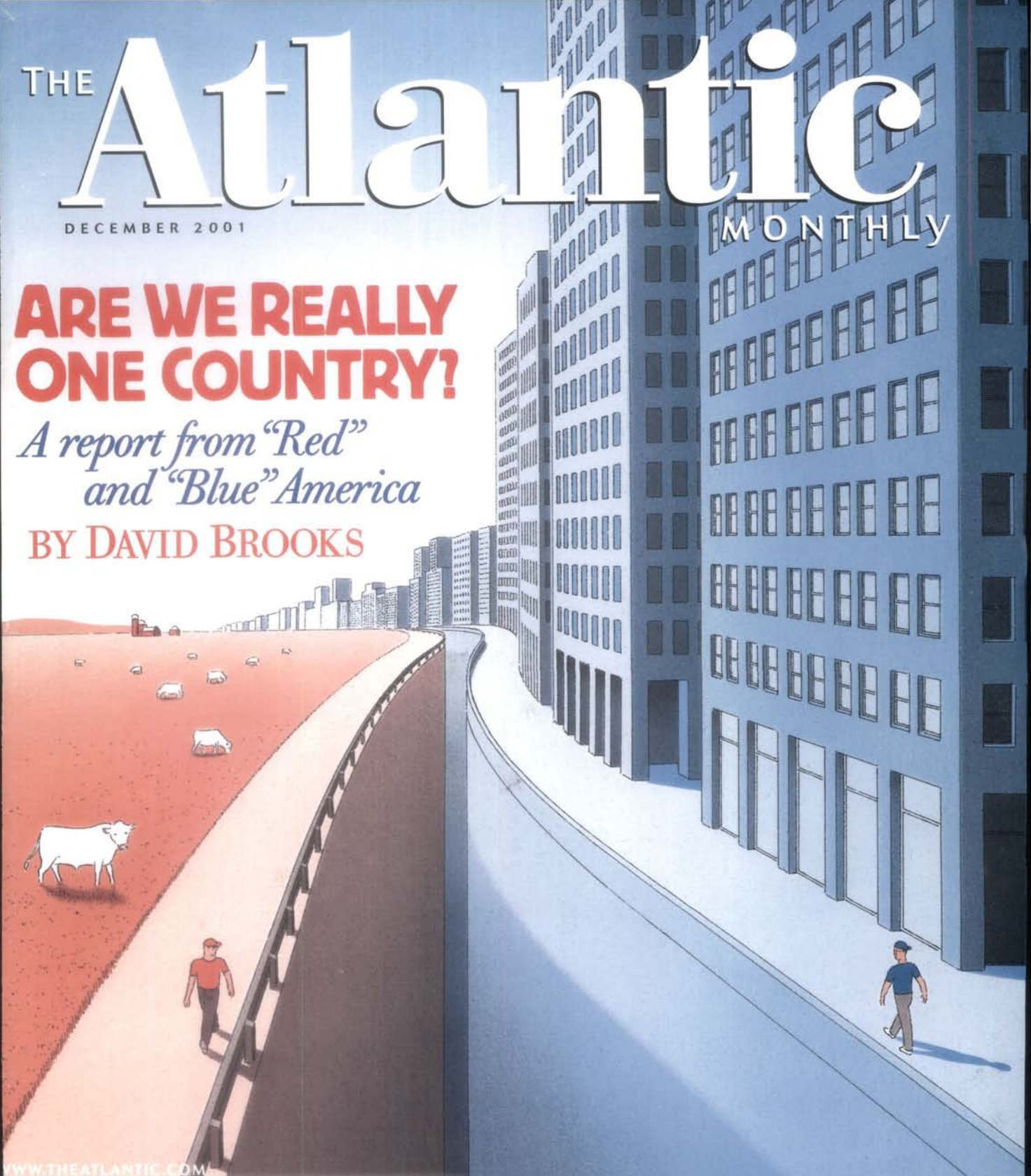
DECEMBER 2001

MONTHLY

ARE WE REALLY ONE COUNTRY?

*A report from "Red"
and "Blue" America*

BY DAVID BROOKS



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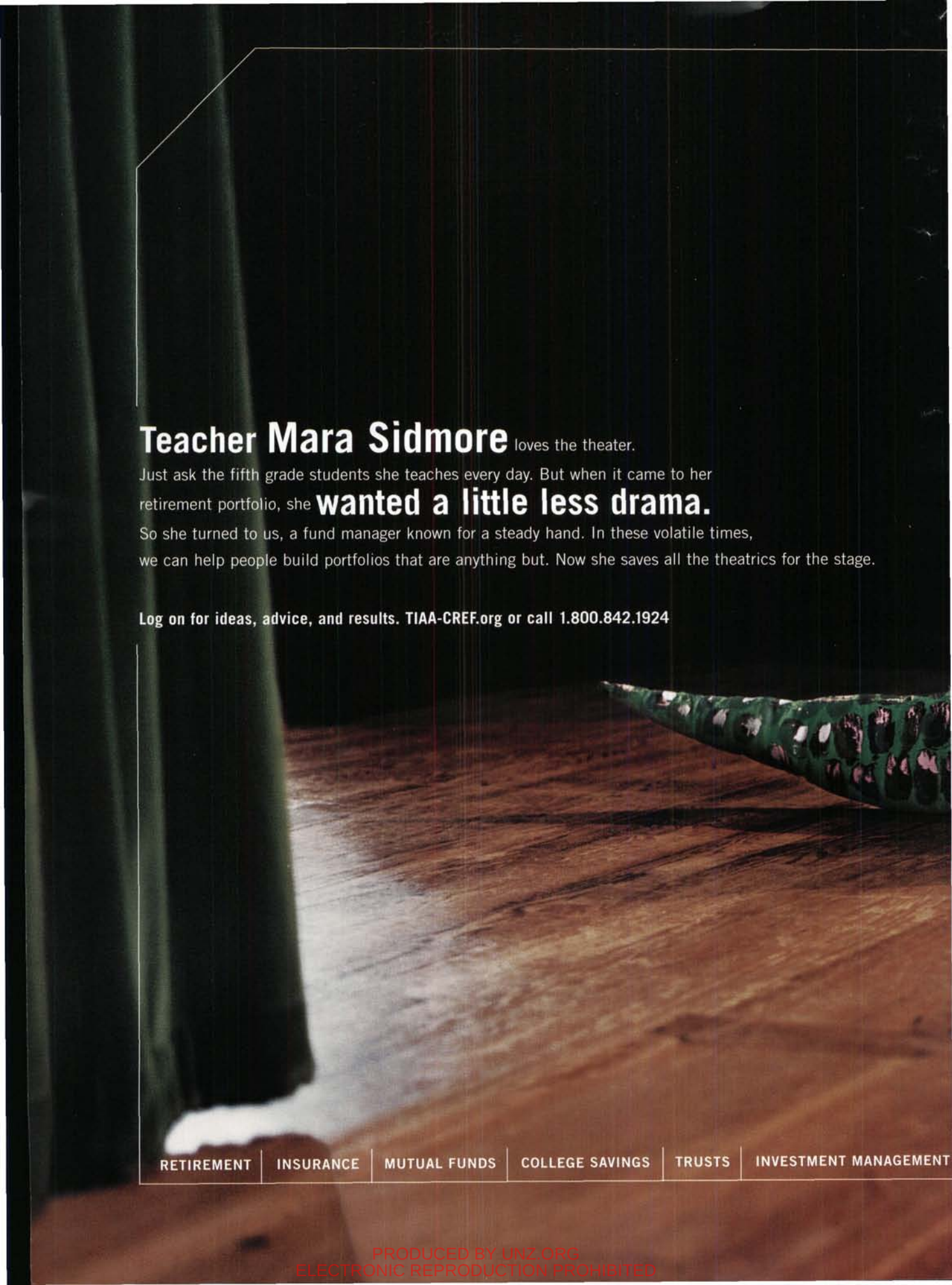
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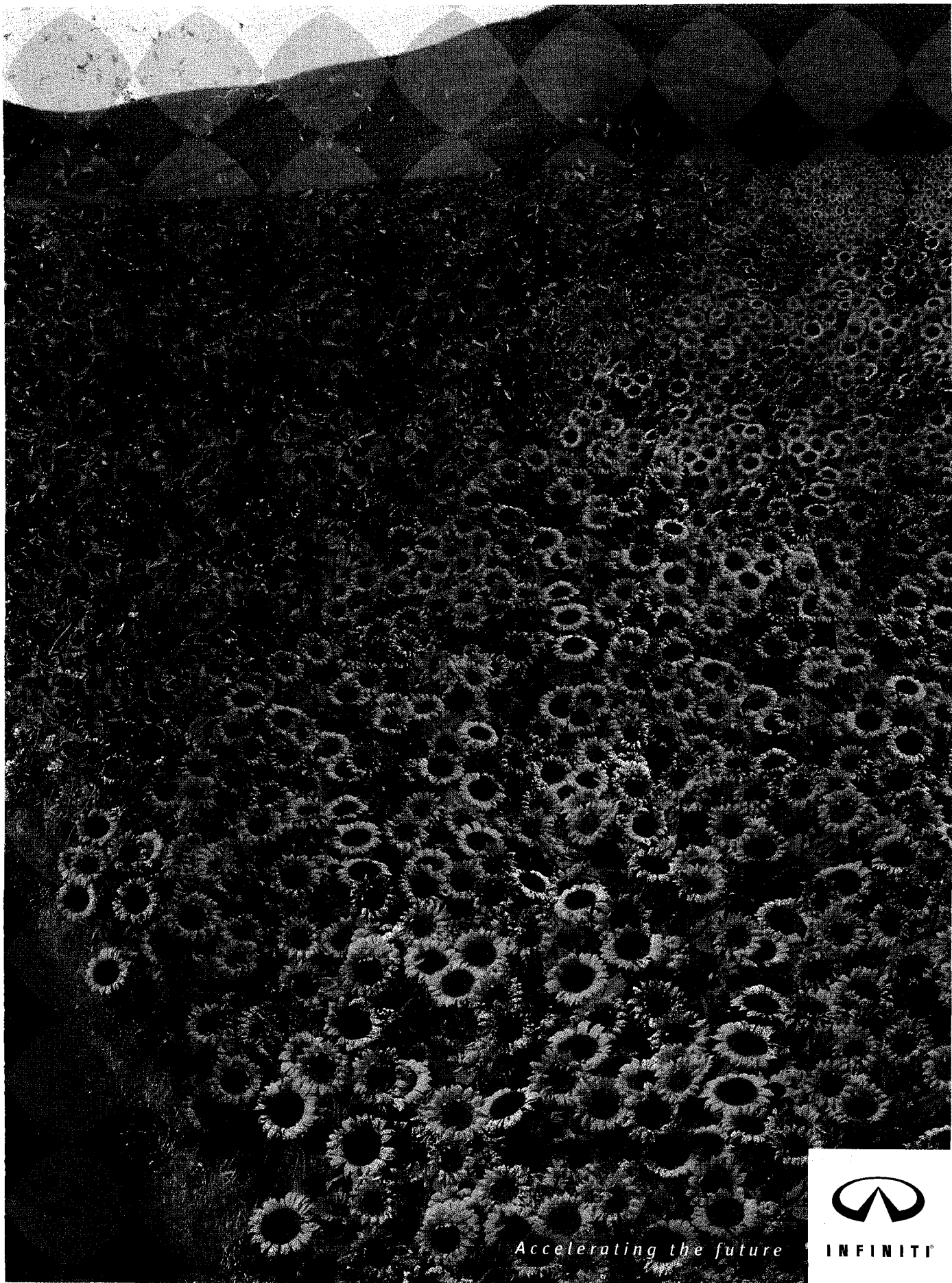


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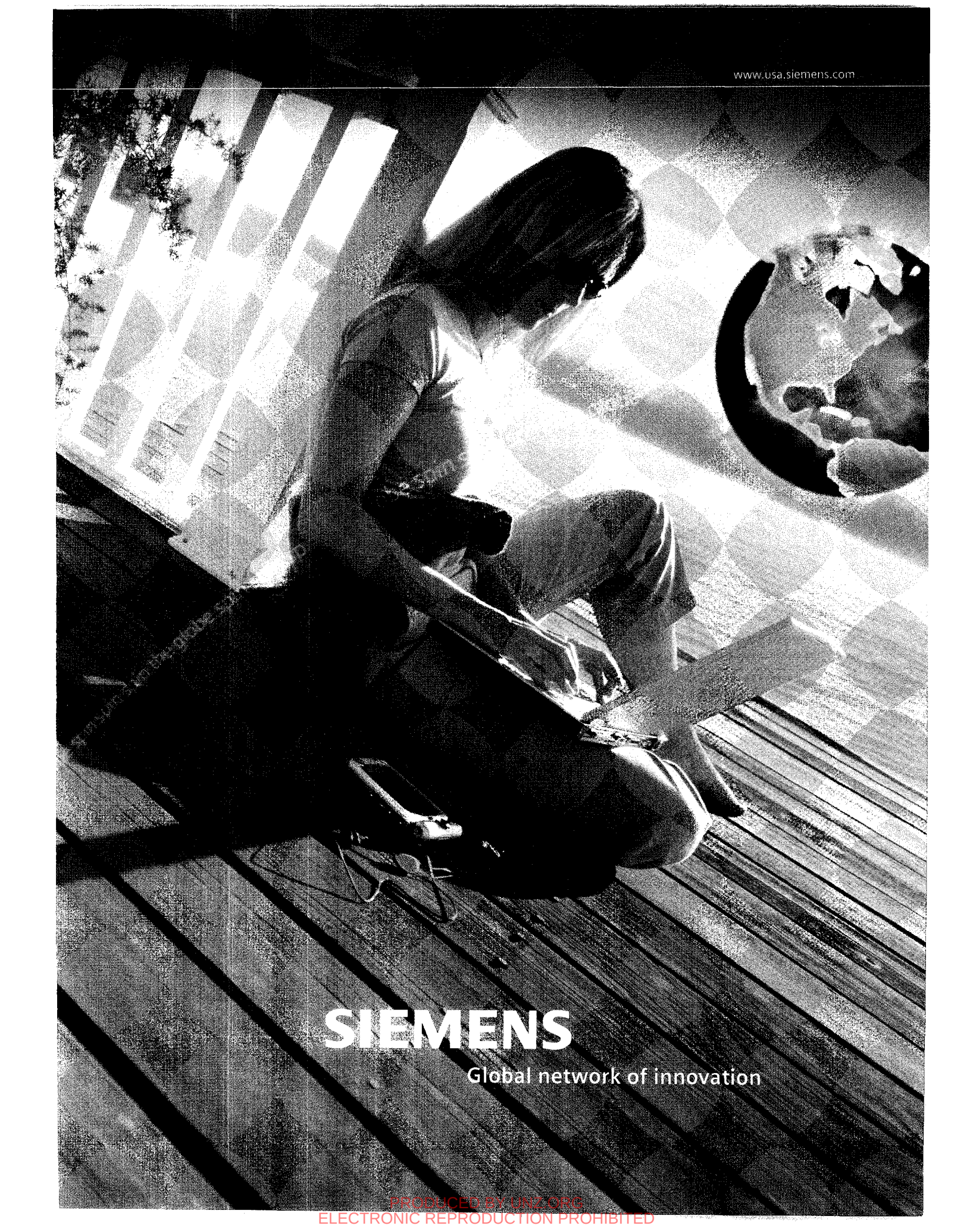
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A black and white photograph of a woman with long dark hair, wearing a light-colored short-sleeved shirt and dark pants, sitting on a wooden deck. She is leaning forward, working on a laptop. To her right, a large globe is visible in the background. The scene is brightly lit, with strong shadows cast on the wooden planks of the deck. The overall mood is professional and global.

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77 NORTH WASHINGTON STREET

The thing that is sometimes dangerous about writers is that they can express their ideas more cleverly than most people. This wouldn't ever be a bad thing if good writers always had good—that is, sound, true—ideas. But there is in fact no necessary correlation between an ability to finesse language and a true understanding of the world. It is a great blessing that it is only a poetic fancy that poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world. (As for columnists, the mind reels.)

That wordsmithery may not equate with rightness would also not matter if mere cleverness weren't so absurdly potent. But it is; felicity of expression can veil the illogic of the most astonishingly obvious howlers. Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice? Tell that to the hapless headless of the French Revolution. There are no second acts in American lives? Sure there are. Also third, fourth, tenth, and hundredth; and also in French, Japanese, and Nigerian lives. All happy families resemble one another, but each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way? No, that is exactly wrong. Happy families are wildly, even eccentrically, diverse. But in every unhappy family, as any social worker can tell you, you will likely find the same dreary woes: dead love, physical or psychological brutality, alcoholism, infidelity, poverty.

One well-expressed wrong idea that has had a great run these past fifty years is the cartoonist Walt Kelly's lament "We have met the enemy and he is us." Like all the catchiest wrong ideas, this draws its strength not only from pithiness but also from a limited measure of truth. Kelly, writing in the age of Senator Joseph McCarthy, had an obvious point: the undermining of America's values and America's liberties by America's guardians against the communist threat seemed to many at least as great a danger as the threat itself. Kelly's idea also benefited from another quality necessary for longevity in the idea racket. It appealed to an inherent human desire—in this case the desire to be perverse. In the USSR the United States had an enemy that anyone could see posed a danger of the direst sort (global war, nuclear holocaust). How appealing to pretend that this giant of a menace from Them was a sort of joke (in some circles "Red Menace" made the transformation from earnest to ironic in about five minutes), and that the real enemy was Us.

But "Us" meant something actually quite different from "us." It meant, actually, "Them"—not an external Them but an internal one. When Kelly wrote of the enemy, he did not mean Americans who thought as he and his friends thought; he meant Americans who did not think this way—he meant people who believed that McCarthy was right and the menace was real. And actually, he did not even mean those people; he meant a caricature of those people.

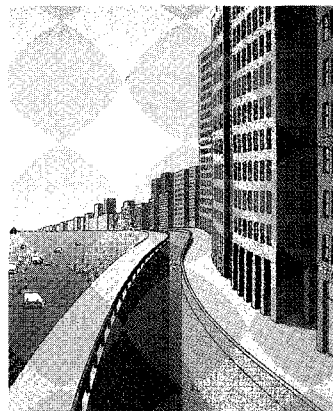
This tendency to see the nation as populated by two peoples—one's own crowd and this other, hostile, foreign, and indeed almost unknowable tribe—has hardened over the years into something close to a permanent piece of conventional wisdom. And this view of the country, it seemed, came to enjoy received status not only in liberal America's

view of conservative America but also in conservative America's view of liberal America. When Susan Sontag and Ralph Reed looked out the window, they saw essentially the same country: a society and a culture divided between right-thinking Us and scary Us as Them, with Us as a perpetually threatened perpetual minority.

In recent years this understanding of national identity seemed validated by election returns that showed a voting public split almost equally. The most recent and most stunning of these results occurred in

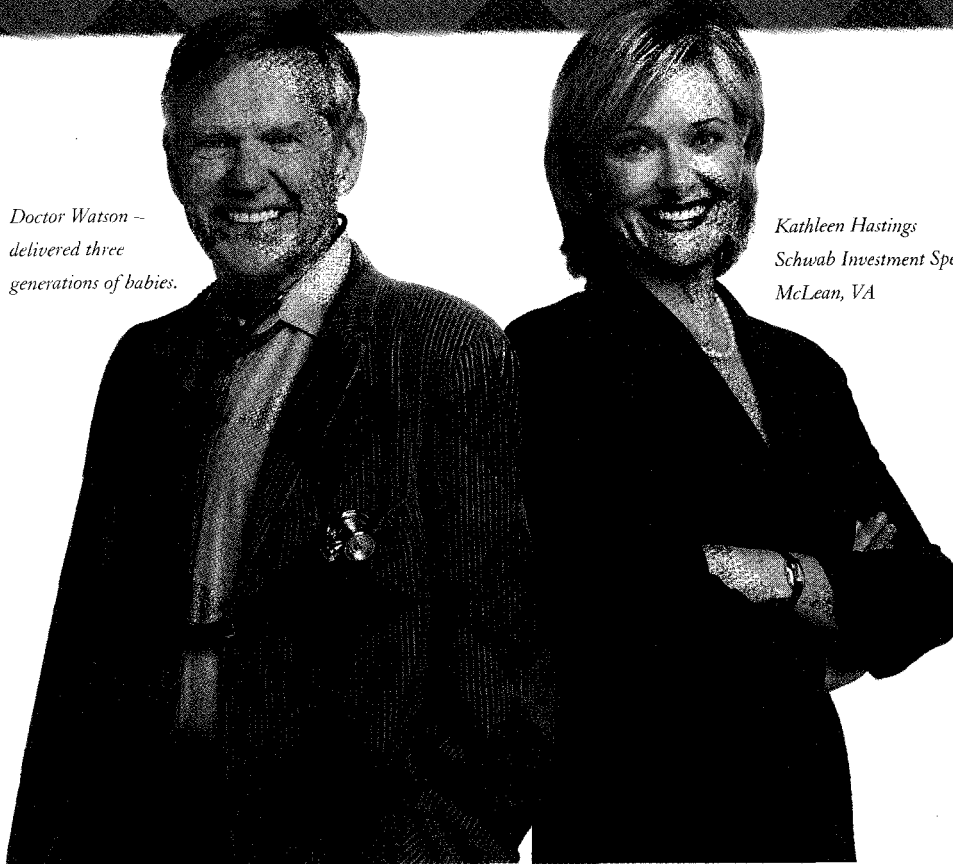
the presidential race of 2000, when election-night maps appeared to show that the country really was something like two nations: a predominantly urban, coastal, and liberal Blue America, and a predominantly rural, non-coastal and conservative Red America.

The Atlantic's correspondent David Brooks lives, as he writes in this issue's cover story, in "one of the steaming-hot centers of the great espresso machine that is Blue America." Over the course of several months Brooks paid a series of visits to a place in Red America, Franklin County, Pennsylvania. His goal was to explore, in various ways, one question: Are we really two nations? This is, as he writes, a question that became a great deal more important on September 11. The truths Brooks found are funny and nuanced, and also heartening. We are, it turns out, one nation after all, slightly divisible but not divided. A good thing, too, because it turns out there is an enemy, and it is not us. —MICHAEL KELLY



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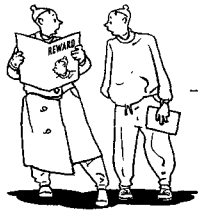


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IN THIS ISSUE

Maps produced during the 2000 presidential election revealed a nation distinctly divided into the Democratic-leaning and largely urban “Blue” America of the East and West Coasts and the Republican-leaning and largely rural or small-town “Red” America in between. But the apparent split may be less a chasm than a gully, writes **David Brooks** (“One Nation, Slightly Divisible”), who shuttled between Red and Blue America to report this month’s cover story. Brooks, an *Atlantic Monthly* correspondent, is also a contributing editor of *Newsweek*, a senior editor of *The Weekly Standard*, and a political analyst for *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*. His most recent book is *Bobos in Paradise* (2000).

Samuel P. Huntington, a professor of government at Harvard, has long been one of America’s most prominent and controversial intellectuals—noted for his unsentimental views of both U.S. domestic affairs and the nation’s dealings with the rest of the world. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on September 11 Huntington’s “realist” vision seems terribly vindicated. **Robert D. Kaplan** (“Looking the World in the Eye”), who examines Huntington’s life and work, is a correspondent for *The Atlantic* and a senior fellow at the New America Foundation. His new book, *Warrior Politics: Why Leadership Demands a Pagan Ethos*, will be published this month. An earlier book, *Soldiers of God: With Islamic Warriors in Afghanistan and Pakistan* (1990), has just been reissued.

Penny Wolfson (“Moonrise”) reflects on how life has been and what lies ahead for her teenage son, Ansel, stricken by muscular dystrophy. Wolfson’s essays have appeared in *The New York Times* and *Exceptional Parent*.

Over the past three decades the poems of **W. S. Merwin** (*Paradiso XXXIII*)

have appeared in these pages more frequently than those of any other poet. Merwin’s most recent collection of poems, *The Pupil*, appeared in October. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for poetry in 1971.

Lesley Dorman (“The Old Economy Husband”) teaches fiction and poetry writing at The Writers Studio, in New York City. Her fiction has appeared in *Five Points*. She is at work on a collection of short stories and a screenplay.

In Notes & Dispatches this month: **P. J. O’Rourke** travels from Washington to London and back, and comments on the state of security and of public opinion; **Christopher Hitchens** excoriates his longtime comrades on the left for their refusal to admit the evil of September 11; **Bruce Hoffman** relates a tale from Gaza, about how Yasir Arafat once dealt with a terrorist threat of his own; **Conor Cruise O’Brien** describes the Irish Republican Army’s covert strategy to gain police powers in Belfast; and **Jeffrey Tayler** reports from Moscow on what lies behind Vladimir Putin’s calculated bet to support the fight against terrorism.

This month the magazine introduces The Agenda, a new department devoted to issues of American politics and public policy. **James Fallows**, *The Atlantic*’s national correspondent, looks at the conflicting “lessons of history” being applied by those managing the response to the recent terrorist attacks; **Richard A. Posner**, a judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, explores the ever shifting fulcrum between civil liberties and national security; **Jason Vest** explains fourth-generation warfare; and **Jonathan Rauch** describes one maverick scientist’s commonsense approach to blunting the effects of a bio-terrorist attack.

The French island of Ouessant, off the westernmost tip of Brittany, experiences some of the most awful winter weather in the world. The *Atlantic* correspondent **William Langewiesche** (“Storm Island”) recounts a tempest-tossed weekend.

Rosalie Parker wandered into the Harvard Boxing Club and ended up in the national Golden Gloves competition. **Daniel Boyne** (“Portrait of a Woman as a Young Boxer”) is the author of *The Red Rose Crew: A True Story of Women, Winning, and the Water* (2000).

Marshall Jon Fisher (“Pixels at an Exhibition”) compares digital cameras and traditional film cameras, and argues that the digital age has at last arrived. He is a frequent contributor to *The Atlantic*.

The simplicity and naturalism of Alice Munro’s writing has led more than one critic to hail her as the contemporary Chekhov. So why is she not better known? **Mona Simpson** (“A Quiet Genius”) assesses Munro’s writing and reputation on the occasion of her new collection, *Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage*. Simpson is the author of several novels, including *Anywhere But Here* (1986) and *Off Keck Road* (2000).

Bruce Hoffman (“One-Alarm Fire”), who finds the best-selling book *Germes* to be considerably overwrought, is the editor in chief of the journal *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* and the author of *Inside Terrorism* (1998).

Caitlin Flanagan (“Costumes From Camelot”) considers the peculiar blend of fortitude and femininity that underlies Jacqueline Kennedy’s singular mystique. Flanagan’s essay takes as its point of departure the catalogue of the recent exhibition of the former First Lady’s dresses.

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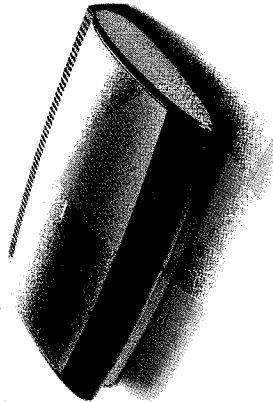
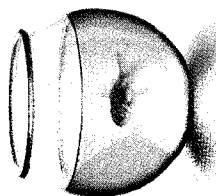
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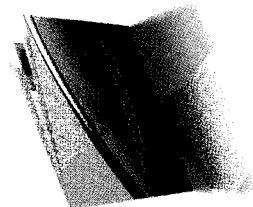
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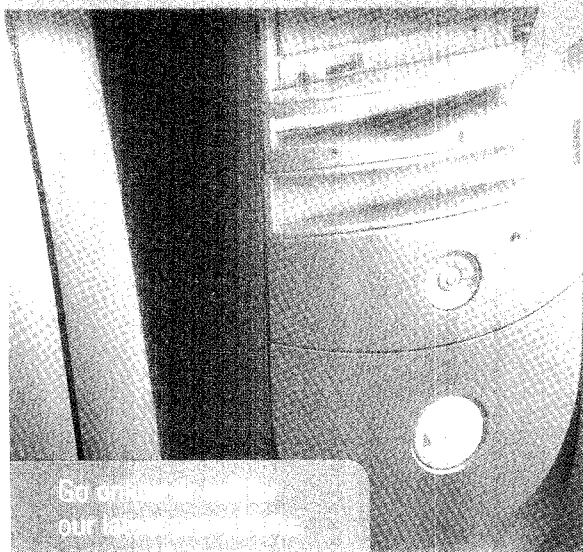
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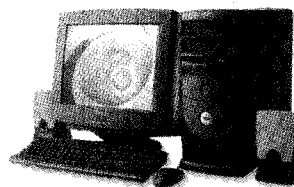
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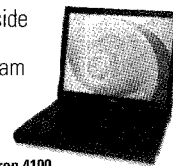
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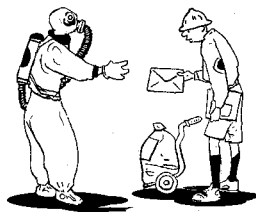


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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bystanders to Genocide

I would like to correct four errors in Samantha Power's otherwise interesting article on the American response to Rwanda's 1994 genocide ("Bystanders to Genocide," September *Atlantic*).

First, the article says that the United States failed to snap satellite photos of large gatherings of Rwandan civilians or of mass graves, to intercept military communications, or to infiltrate the country. Actually, within three days of the outbreak of violence on April 6, 1994, the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency obtained satellite photos, communications intercepts, and human intelligence that confirmed a widespread, centrally controlled killing campaign. I reported these facts, based on interviews with senior U.S. intelligence officials, in my recent book, *The Limits of Humanitarian Intervention: Genocide in Rwanda* (Brookings, 2001).

Second, the article asserts that the failure of U.S. officials to recognize genocide during its first days "stemmed from political, moral, and imaginative weaknesses, not informational ones." The main problem initially was, in fact, informational—not too little but rather too much conflicting information. For two weeks the media, the UN, and intelligence sources reported that violence in Rwanda was waning and that it stemmed from a civil war that the Tutsi were winning—thereby undercutting any notion of a genocide against Tutsi. For two weeks the DIA warnings failed to penetrate this background noise or were explicitly rejected by U.S. officials as alarmist Tutsi propaganda. Power's article provides no evidence to contradict this finding!

Third, the article asserts that if the small contingent of troops sent to evacuate foreign nationals had instead combined with peacekeepers already on the ground, the UN commander might have been able to stop the genocide. This is

demonstrably false. Even after the evacuees landed, no more than about 4,000 foreign soldiers were in Rwanda, including about 2,000 ineffective peacekeepers from Bangladesh and similar states. They were not "heavily armed," as the article asserts, but, rather, lacked heavy weapons, armored vehicles, or even jeeps to transport themselves. (They commandeered abandoned vehicles to carry out the evacuation.) Even with the reserve Belgian and U.S. forces in Kenya and Burundi, only about 5,000 foreign soldiers were in the area, and they were neither armed nor provisioned for combat. Confronting these international forces would have been approximately 100,000 Rwandan soldiers, national policemen, militia-men, and rebels, including elite units equipped with heavy weapons, armored vehicles, and surface-to-air missiles. No one can say for sure how the Rwandan forces would have reacted to an intervention, but if 5,000 lightly armed foreign soldiers had confronted 100,000 better-armed Rwandans on their home turf, the UN commander hardly would have "had the numbers on his side."

Fourth, the article implies that a quick intervention could have stopped the violence before it mushroomed into genocide. The Rwandan genocide was the fastest-moving in history. Half the Tutsi victims were killed in the first three weeks, before the end of April and before U.S. officials had even figured out what was going on. Though the United States did oppose direct intervention throughout the crisis, and intervention at any time could have saved many lives, the sad fact is that even an intervention launched as soon as the attempted genocide came to light would have been too late to "prevent" it—or even to save half the ultimate victims.

Alan J. Kuperman
Visiting Scholar
USC Center for International Studies
Venice, Calif.

In her superb piece on the Rwanda tragedy Samantha Power states that there was no legislative reaction.

I chaired the Senate's Subcommittee on Africa at that point. When the news of the slaughter in Rwanda first reached us, Senator Jim Jeffords, the ranking Republican on the subcommittee, and I introduced a resolution with six Senate co-sponsors urging action by the United States and the United Nations. Interest was minimal, and the Administration opposed our resolution. Then Senator Jeffords and I got on the phone to General Dallaire, in Rwanda, and he told us that if he could get 5,000 to 8,000 soldiers quickly, he could stop the slaughter. Senator Jeffords and I had a letter produced immediately and had it hand-delivered to the White House that afternoon. When I didn't hear anything for several days, I called, trying to reach Anthony Lake. He was not there, but a member of his staff told me that they would do nothing, because there was "not a base of public support for doing anything that significant in Africa." It was a tragically anemic answer.

Paul Simon
Director, Public Policy Institute
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, Ill.

At the time of the Rwandan genocide I worked at the U.S. mission to the United Nations and covered the peacekeeping operation in Rwanda. Power's analysis of events is consistent with my recollections, introduces new and critical evidence, and assembles the historical pieces in a way that generates the most comprehensive and balanced picture available of U.S. policy toward the genocide.

Many of the factors that led U.S. policymakers to ignore the buildup to the genocide—the obsession with the civil war, the view that peacekeeping was



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effective only when there was a peace to keep—were also present in the Security Council and the Secretariat. The UN as a whole was slow to respond, and when it did, it responded sluggishly. Perhaps most mysterious is the behavior of Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali during the first weeks of the genocide. We now know that UNAMIR Force Commander Romeo Dallaire was telling headquarters that ethnic cleansing was gathering speed and that a modest reinforcement might protect civilians and deter the killers. Yet Boutros-Ghali did not deliver this information. Instead he stressed the civil war, failed to speak of ethnic cleansing, and observed that Dallaire was unable to provide recommendations because of the chaotic situation on the ground. Such observations completely undermined any push for intervention. Indeed, at the outset of the crisis he privately concluded against intervention. Only after the Security Council voted on April 21 to draw down the force did he provide a moral imperative for intervention.

Michael Barnett
Department of Political Science
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wis.

Samantha Power replies:

In reviewing the difference an intervention could have made, we should not treat the pace and trajectory of the Rwandan genocide as fixed, as Alan Kuperman does. Since a battered collection of 500 UN peacekeepers managed to keep 25,000 Rwandans safe, a deployment of well-armed UN reinforcements, Pentagon radio jamming, or even mere moral attention from senior Washington policymakers might have saved many more. But we will never know. What we do know is that for the first two months of the genocide the United States (and its European allies) publicly reiterated unwillingness to get involved and sent a signal to the Rwandan perpetrators that they had free rein to do as they chose. The United States used its clout on the Security Council to secure the withdrawal of most UN peacekeepers from Rwanda.

As DIA contacts indeed confirmed, U.S. officials knew that Hutu soldiers and militia had begun exterminating Rwanda's Tutsi almost immediately after the genocide began.

But like all foreign crises, the Rwandan genocide produced an overload of information, and a vast array of conflicting information. A Clinton Administration determined to deter or curb killings would have deployed additional assets to sift through the available intelligence in order to piece together as complete a picture as possible. Instead, as Michael Barnett writes, Rwanda was never made a priority, determined intelligence taskings were never made, and U.S. officials continued to take shelter in the fog of plausible deniability. Senators Simon and Jeffords can be commended for urging the White House to do more. But the letters and phone calls of these concerned advocates were, sadly, not enough to convince the Clinton Administration that it had strategic, moral, or domestic political reasons to act.

Early Decision

James Fallows's "The Early-Decision Racket" (September *Atlantic*) rests on a dubious premise. Following the work of the economist Alan Krueger, Fallows argues that very good high school students (good SATs and grades) who choose, say, Ohio State over Harvard do not earn significantly less later in life than if they had gone to Harvard, thus suggesting that the current anxiety about elite, highly selective colleges is about something irrational and unnecessary. If we're talking about making \$100,000 to \$150,000, which would put the student in the top five to ten percent of the income distribution in the United States (perhaps five to ten million households!), we're probably on firm ground.

But does it matter when one begins to talk about incomes that are much greater, say \$300,000 or \$1 million a year (not to mention power and influence in the legal profession, the medical profession, or the highest reaches of the corporate world)? Here the sociological data strongly suggest that it does.

Making \$150,000 in the upper middle class today is being a schlepper of sorts, and one certainly doesn't have to go to Harvard for such an exalted career, as the Krueger data show. But making \$750,000 is another thing altogether, as is being a prominent Washington, D.C., lawyer. What might be going on here is that the upper middle class in the Unit-

ed States has grown so large in the past twenty years that people of middling origins can now actually compete for positions in the highest reaches of American professional and corporate life.

If you want a decent, quiet, and morally upstanding life, study hard in high school and go to Ohio State—you'll save money, avoid a lot of personal heartache, and make a very nice living. If you want to be on Harvard Law Review and thus be a serious candidate for a clerkship at the Supreme Court, or have a shot at a partnership at one of the most powerful American law firms, or a leadership role at a medical school, or get a Ph.D. in economics from MIT, or become a CEO, skip Ohio State and take that acceptance from Harvard College. Does Fallows really believe otherwise?

Steven R. Cohen
New York, N.Y.

James Fallows covers all the bases in "The Early-Decision Racket," although he doesn't give as much emphasis to the cynical undermining of the academic integrity of the high school senior year as I might have wished.

I applaud his suggestions for reform and add a suggestion of my own:

How about if we all refuse to send out transcripts until final grades are given, in May? In view of the contemptible history of the "college hustle," it may be naive to expect reform to come from higher education.

Bruce E. Buxton
Headmaster, Falmouth Academy
Falmouth, Mass.

I disagree with James Fallows's proposed solution to the early-decision problem: a moratorium led by ten of the most selective colleges.

The real, the simple, and the quick solution to the ED nightmare is to do away with the requirement that colleges wait until April 1 before notifying applicants of admission committees' decisions. Eliminate the notification date and allow all colleges to compete in an open market, and ED programs will disappear.

However, for this change to occur, the following associations would have to agree: the National Association of College Admission Counselors, the American

Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers, the College Board, the American Council on Education, the National Association of School Principals, the National Student Association, and the American School Counselor Association.

On second thought, Fallows's suggestion might be easier.

*Tedd D. Kelly
Falls Church, Va.*

James Fallows's proposal that colleges give up early-decision acceptances is, of course, absurd. It won't happen, and it wouldn't necessarily be a good thing if it did. Fallows begins by strongly suggesting that college-admissions people do not like early decision. Later he declares, without reservation, "High school counselors, most of whom take a dim overall view of early decision ..."

As the dean of faculty and later the headmaster of a private school, I worked for fifteen years as a college-admissions adviser to young people, many of whom went on to attend prestigious colleges. I found that early acceptance took the pressure off seniors. They could enjoy their senior year instead of paying for and filling out college applications and then sweating out acceptances.

*J. William Downs
Suffern, N.Y.*

James Fallows replies:

I disagree with Steven Cohen mainly on one point: that the Ivy League is a good route to CEO-hood. As I wrote, there are strong "network" effects between certain elite schools and certain professions. A name-school background matters most in appointive professions, where it's hard to prove objectively who's best suited for a job. The more a line of work is exposed to market tests (profits, votes, inventions), the less college connections matter. CEOs of major corporations are distinctly non-Ivy League in their background. The CEO of the nation's largest company graduated from the University of Wisconsin; of the second largest from Pittsburgh State University; of the third from Duke; of the fourth from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, in Australia. Of the ten largest U.S. companies, four have Ivy League CEOs, two from Dartmouth and two from Cornell.

Bruce Buxton's suggestion sounds good to

me. And it sounds as if Tedd Kelly is going through the same process of elimination that made me suggest a moratorium as the most promising step. Since the article came out, I have heard from several college-admissions deans, essentially asking the public to keep pressure on them to make such a change.

J. William Downs's overall experience with early admission was good. The several dozen high school counselors I interviewed (many of whom I quoted) agreed that early plans could be good for those students prepared to take advantage of them. Such students must, among other things, come from families that do not need to worry about comparing financial-aid offers from a range of colleges. But virtually all the counselors I met said that the system as a whole was pernicious.

College Admission

Caitlin Flanagan ("Confessions of a Prep School College Counselor," September *Atlantic*) has many things right, but she misses the real reason for an obsession about getting into certain elite schools. Certainly a great many underrated schools have excellent faculties (Chapel Hill, the University of Chicago, the University of Washington, to name just three). And many of us who teach in college realize that the best students don't always have the "best" grades. The key point, however, is that exactly where a student goes *does* matter, because student bodies differ tremendously from place to place, and a student learns the most from fellow students. The differences between student bodies at, say, Stanford, MIT, and Harvard are pronounced, and the contrast is even more striking if those schools are compared with Michigan, Duke, or Princeton. The contrasts are deeply textured, only partially described in terms of class. The real variables include politics, economic background, population density, arts versus engineering, the school's location in relation to the Mason-Dixon Line, and, yes, the general intelligence level of the students. Students can tell, even "after only one visit," whether a place will work for them, and they are usually right.

*John Doyle
Professor of Physics
Harvard University
Cambridge, Mass.*

Caitlin Flanagan replies:

The idea that students learn "the most from fellow students" is an attractive one, suggesting, as it does, that the smartest kids would do best to wander away from campus altogether. If they crammed a few copies of The Canterbury Tales, a Bunsen burner, and a decent recording of The Goldberg Variations into their backpacks, surely they would have all they needed for an education of unsurpassed excellence. In reality, of course, college students—no matter how smart—don't learn "the most" from their fellow late-adolescents, they learn "the most" from their teachers. John Doyle is right that "deeply textured" contrasts distinguish one school from another, but surely this is true of all colleges, not only the elite ones. If high school students are encouraged to find ways to evaluate colleges other than by their admissions requirements, we will see fewer teenagers cramming for standardized tests and many more engaged in activities of genuine intellectual worth.

Correction:

The letter below appeared in the October issue, but we incorrectly identified its author. Apologies all around.

For the first page or so I naively assumed that B. R. Myers's seemingly petty effort to deflate the reputations of some justly celebrated prose stylists (Annie Proulx, Cormac McCarthy, Don DeLillo, and others) was actually serious ("A Reader's Manifesto," July/August *Atlantic*). Once I caught on to the joke, however, that the author is satirizing a humorless, literal-minded critic with a tin ear, I chuckled my way to the end, delighted by the inspired raillery. Myers wickedly shows the pompous object of his satire to be utterly bewildered by imaginative readers who delight in the sight and sound of gorgeous sentences that, following Emily Dickinson's dictum, tell the truth but tell it slant. The satirist's hilarious fuddy-duddy emerges as the polar opposite of the sharp-eyed Carolyn See, who correctly recognizes that Annie Proulx is indeed, sentence by sentence, "the best prose stylist working in English now, bar none."

*Joel Conarroe
New York, N.Y.*

HOW DO YOU CALCULATE THE VALUE OF A MEDICINE?

by Alan F. Holmer

Do you count the number of years it adds to a person's life? Do you consider whether it enables a patient to experience less pain, or enjoy life more? Do you look at whether a medicine enables a person to work, or live independently? Do you calculate the money saved when a medicine helps a patient avoid surgery, the hospital, or admission to a nursing home?

The answer: all of the above.

Until recently, evidence of the value of medicines has been mainly intuitive, anecdotal, or narrowly focused. Our instinct tells us it would be better to take a medicine than to have our chests cut open for bypass surgery. We know that arthritis medicine is a lot cheaper than nursing home fees would be. And medical journals have published numerous peer-reviewed studies quantifying the cost-effectiveness of medicines to treat stroke, cystic fibrosis, asthma, AIDS, cancer, migraine headaches, depression, osteoporosis, schizophrenia, heart disease, and many other conditions.

Now, however, health care experts are beginning to calculate not just the value of individual medicines but also the value of medicines as a form of health care and the value of the innovation that creates such medicines. The influential journal *Health Affairs* devoted most of its fall issue to a multifaceted examination of the issue by leading economists and experts. The answers they came up with should be required reading for those who shape health care policy.

The overall answer is that pharmaceutical innovation is paying off for patients by improving the quality of their lives, and for insurers and employers by reducing total health care expenditures.

The experts got to this answer by various routes. For example, Columbia University economist Frank R. Lichtenberg, Ph.D., looked specifically at newer drugs. He found that the pharmaceutical innovation that constantly replaces older drugs with new breakthroughs has reduced illness, deaths, and overall health care spending. For example, using a five-year-old drug instead of a fifteen-year-old drug increased spending by \$18 per patient but reduced other medical costs by more than \$71—nearly a four-fold offset.

"Drug costs, and changes in drug costs, are visible to the naked eye," concluded Lichtenberg. "Identification of drug benefits requires careful analysis of good data."

Dr. Lichtenberg's careful analysis should prompt policy makers—who tend to look harder at the cost side of the ledger than at the value side—to take another look. So should another *Health Affairs* article, by health care economist J. D. Kleinke, concluding that "High-priced new drugs may be the cheapest weapon we have in our struggle against rising overall medical expenses."

Two presidential health advisers—David Cutler, Ph.D., who advised President Clinton, and Mark McClellan, M.D., Ph.D., who is currently in the Bush White House—looked at the benefits of innovation in specific areas, such as heart disease. They found that advances in treating heart disease, including better medicines, saved the Medicare program \$7 in treatment costs for every \$1 spent on innovations.

You've all heard the old Oscar Wilde line about how a cynic is someone who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing. It's good to see that recognized experts are pounding away at the persistent public cynicism about prescription medicines, pointing to the overwhelming value of breakthrough medicines and the innovation that produces them.

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Alan F. Holmer is the president of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, which represents the country's leading research-based pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies.



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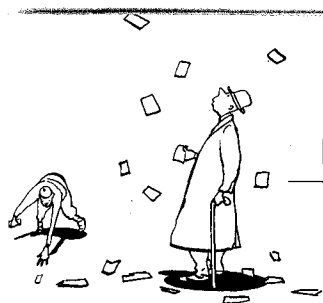
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INNOCENT BYSTANDER

by CULLEN MURPHY

WALKING BACK THE CAT

The culture of explanation

.....

Upheaval Dome is a craterlike structure in the sere desolation of Utah's Canyonlands National Park. It is a mile wide and 1,500 feet deep, and scientists are still not entirely sure how it came to be. One theory implicates the erosion of a vast underlying salt dome. Another theory invokes an otherworldly collision. Upheaval Dome certainly looks like an impact crater. A sign at its edge offers this scenario: "Some 60 million years ago, a huge meteor streaking through space ... pierced the earth's atmosphere directly above this point." The text goes on, "The meteor hit with little warning."

With little warning? Was the Hubble on the fritz? What about ground-based tracking stations? Where was CNN?

The Park Service's writers, of course, meant nothing more than "suddenly," and the wording they chose came to mind naturally. We inhabit a culture of warning, and have come to expect advance notice of nearly everything. This represents a big psychological shift. Our forebears woke up not knowing if a hurricane was about to strike. They did not anticipate fourth-quarter downturns. The threat posed by arterial plaque never entered their minds.

Today medical-imaging outlets, at shopping malls and elsewhere, offer full-body radiological scans ("the best way to show you care for those you love"); the results, preserved on compact discs, display lifelike color reconstructions of the subjects' bones and organs, with highlighted warning signs of tumors and heart disease. By regulation, restaurant menus in my state now display asterisks alongside items such as clams and sushi and soft-boiled

eggs, directing customers to a cautionary footnote: "The Department of Public Health advises that eating raw or undercooked meats, poultry, seafood, shellfish, or eggs may increase your risk of food-borne illness." Last summer the Food and Drug Administration gave its approval to the M2A Swallowable Imaging Capsule, a tiny early-warning spy satellite for the small intestine, which snaps pictures twice a second during the course of its journey. Restaurants may soon provide a bowl of these for departing patrons, next to the mints.



The forward-looking effort to spot trouble on the horizon has a counterpart in the backward-looking effort to figure out what went wrong after trouble has in fact arrived. Intelligence analysts, who often have to second-guess themselves after defections and other failures, have a phrase to describe this kind of diagnostic deconstruction: "walking back the cat." A lot of walking back the cat is being done right now, in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington. But the basic procedure extends into every aspect of our lives. I won't hazard an estimate as to what percentage of GNP is allocated

to walking back the cat; it clearly consumes a growing share. The study of history and cosmology is devoted to it, as is the great bulk of legal practice, much of medicine and market research, about half of geology, theology, and literature, all of psychoanalysis. Walking back the cat is what congressional investigations do. It informs the case-study approach to business-school education and lies behind the idea of the "financial autopsy." It's the whole point of watching videos of yourself at golf or tennis clinics.

An intensifying focus on "What went wrong?" is nowhere more apparent than in the proliferation of "black-box" technologies. The black box that everyone knows about is the flight-data recorder on commercial aircraft, which preserves a second-by-second record of mechanical and electronic performance. One much publicized new application is in stock cars, a consequence of the death of Dale Earnhardt during the Daytona 500 last February. Black boxes are also being installed in some passenger cars, to preserve data on speed, gas-pedal position,

brake activity, force of collision, air-bag deployment, and seat-belt use. An experimental black box tested by Toyota goes even further—it has sensors capable of discerning elements of a driver's physical state, such as sobriety and cardiac condition. Rental-car companies are already installing devices that could determine if customers break company rules (for instance, by leaving the country) or drive too fast. Acme Rent-a-Car, in New Haven, fines customers \$150 for every instance in which the car's speed exceeds 80 miles an hour for two minutes or longer.

Black boxes are standard equipment

GREG CLARKE



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on trains and buses. Proposals have been advanced to put them on roller coasters and fishing boats. Although most people don't give it a moment's thought, the "History" folder in a personal computer's Web browser effectively serves as a flight-data recorder for Internet surfing. An item in the satirical newspaper *The Onion* once presented an interview with a psychologist who specializes in retrieving thought processes from Web browsing.

"Let's look at Christine's time online last night," said Kimble, pointing to an opened history folder on the computer screen. "She starts at the Godiva gourmet chocolates online gift catalog at 7:35 p.m. Then it's on to eDiets.com at 7:43 p.m. and the Nordic Track web site at 7:45. I'm guessing she clicked on a banner ad at eDiets to get there. Then it's on to 'Liposuction FAQs' at 7:52. Next is a page titled 'Sexy Swimwear Sale: Dare To Be Bare.' Then, at 8:06 p.m., it's back to the Godiva chocolates secure-server online order form."

Arguing that the operating room is "the cockpit of the hospital," a professor at London's Imperial College, Dr. Ara Darzi, recently proposed the installation of a black-box system for surgical procedures. Under this scheme a surveillance system would monitor traffic in and out of the operating room and record conversations; surgeons would also wear sensors on their hands to keep a record of every movement. A helpful next step, for the benefit of medical students and other observers, would be to ask the sportscaster John Madden to analyze each stage of the procedure with scrawled diagrams on the replay screen. ("Harbaugh's deep inside, trying for a triple bypass, but he's brought up short. That's an *outstanding* blockage.")

Nature has built any number of black boxes, which we've barely begun learning to use. Tree rings hold an implicit record of wet years and dry years. Ice-core samples capture a history of pollution and climate. Someday we'll learn how to open the hard drive of stored memory in the human brain. The genome is the most portentous black box of all. Mitochondrial DNA contains a record of genetic mutation going back, in effect, to Eve. Every individual's DNA harbors answers to questions that we haven't even thought to ask, though

they all boil down to "What is to blame for yourself?"

Is there a limit to the number of black boxes we're prepared to tolerate? I raise the matter while conceding that many useful applications remain untried. I wish that a black box could be attached to certain waiters and restaurant orders. I wish there was one that could determine when and where I picked up colds, and one that could explain why some people I know always get lost. And I'd like to have a black box that could pinpoint the underlying issue in arguments with family members. ("Oh, so *that's* what this is about," you would realize after viewing the playback.)

But just as a culture of warning can go too far, so can a culture of explanation. On this question there are two basic camps—those who think that everything is potentially knowable and those who think otherwise. People in the first camp see each advance in knowledge as reducing the total stock of the unknown. They optimistically use the word "yet," as in "Alas, we don't know *yet*." People in the second camp see every advance in knowledge, counterintuitively, as somehow expanding the realm of the unknown. They believe, further, that there are times when it's helpful not to get to the bottom of something—when the best course is to put an episode under seal and get on with life. They regard an imperfect memory as an adaptive trait, enhancing long-term survival.

I usually find myself in the second camp—the "let sleeping dogs lie" camp. Walking back the cat has its practical benefits, and often it's essential. But there's something unsettling about the process. For one thing, the walk backward can theoretically go on forever. A reductionist pursuit of explanation quickly leads from proximate causes to antecedent factors and then to the tiniest capillaries of contingency. It leads to "recovered memory" and the "Twinkie defense." And, in general, it encourages an unhealthy confidence in human analytical powers.

Yes, from time to time we must rouse the sleeping dog. But when we walk back the cat, let's also remember what killed it. ▀

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

PREVIEW



DANCE

'Tis the Season for
The Nutcracker

THEATER

Eve Ensler's
New Work

POPULAR MUSIC

Swinging With the
North Mississippi Allstars

JAZZ

The Art of the Trio,
Take Five

FILM

An Exploration
of Grief

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DANCE & THEATER

by Nancy Dalva and John Istel

JOYS OF THE SEASON

There are two ideal ways to see *The Nutcracker*—or perhaps one should say *a Nutcracker*, since there are a multiplicity of versions, some weird, some wonderful. The best way to go is with your grandmother. She should have a cozy soft shoulder to lean on, and cookies in her purse, and a perfumed hankie in case you want to blow your nose. The second-best way is with a child, even if you have to borrow one. I once took a child who brought her pet mouse. The mouse was very little, and white. I know this because she took him out of her knapsack and revealed him to me, cupped in her palm, sometime after the lights went down and the music started. But even if you have to frisk them first, children make good companions at the theater—and not, as you might think, because they find it novel. On the contrary, it is because they love the familiar. Children like to hear the same story night after night at bedtime. They like to eat the same thing every day for lunch. And they don't mind going to see the same ballet every year over the holidays. And really, I don't either. For ballet is never quite the same from one performance to the next. Dancers are people, and people are changeable, even the same ones in the same roles. We don't go to see what happens in a story ballet (we know that already); we go to see *how* it happens. This is true of *The Nutcracker*, and it is equally true of *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty*, or any other bal-

let. (In fact, it is true of any work of art, including a painting. In that latter case, it doesn't change, but you do.) We go to see a favorite dancer grow in a role or to see how that dancer changes with a new partner. We go to see different casts, because each tells its own story. The better we know the ballet, the more these performances will say to us, the more nuances will matter. But there is also, inherently, a degree of the familiar in any traditional production not touted for its radical novelty. Just as there is comfort food, there is comfort art. At *The Nutcracker*, you get to see a party, a magician, a battle, and a transformation. On the stage, snow falls. A sugar plum dances. Presiding over everything is a little girl who, emboldened by love, both saves and is saved. Watching her, we rediscover the blessings of the familiar, the known, and the re-known. In ballet, as in love, the truth is that more is more. (Mark Morris's version of *The Nutcracker*, *The Hard Nut*, can be seen at Berkeley's Zellerbach Hall,

December 7–16. George Balanchine's, performed by the New York City Ballet, runs from November 23 to December 31. Robert Joffrey's, by the Joffrey Ballet of Chicago, runs from November 23 to December 23. *The Nutcracker* at the Pacific Northwest Ballet, in Seattle, runs from November 24 to December 27, and features Maurice Sendak's notable décor.) —N.D.



MARK MORRIS'S *NUTCRACKER*,
THE HARD NUT

WAR CRIES

Eve Ensler's *Vagina Monologues* may be the most efficacious American political play since the 1930s, when Odets's *Waiting for Lefty* caused theatergoers to storm out into the street yelling "Strike, strike, strike" in solidarity with cab drivers. Ensler's play doesn't cause this kind of reaction; instead, audiences financially support Ensler's cause—stopping violence against women—because the playwright insists that commercial productions donate a portion of ticket proceeds. Now, Ensler's long-awaited follow-up, *Necessary Targets*, is set to open. It's both an innocent-American-abroad drama and another spin on the odd couple, focusing on an uptight society psychiatrist who is appointed by a presidential commission to study wo-

men in a Bosnian refugee camp, and the young idealistic writer who is hired to accompany her. Most of the play's seventeen scenes consist of the duo's faltering attempts at therapy sessions with battle-scarred women who wish for simpler attentions. An elderly villager yearns for her favorite cow; a housewife wants her shell-shocked husband to make love to her again; a young woman wants to find the baby she dropped in the woods while escaping rapists. The play hasn't received a full staging yet, suggesting its clunky form and overt sympathies put off possible producers (although two star-studded staged readings were held in New York and Sarajevo in 1998, with Meryl Streep and Glenn Close, respectively, handling the

lead). Enter director Michael Wilson, a master at subduing and enlivening the most florid dialogue, whether from Tennessee Williams or other native playwrights. Wilson stages the world premiere at Connecticut's Hartford Stage, which he heads; it will run through December 23, as part of the company's "American Season." Considering recent events, American audiences will be able to empathize even more strongly with the victims onstage, no longer easily dismissible as foreign unfortunates. Distances have dwindled; the drama is close by. —J.I.

NANCY DALVA'S ESSAYS APPEAR IN THE MAGAZINE *2WICE*. JOHN ISTEL IS THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF *STAGEBILL*.



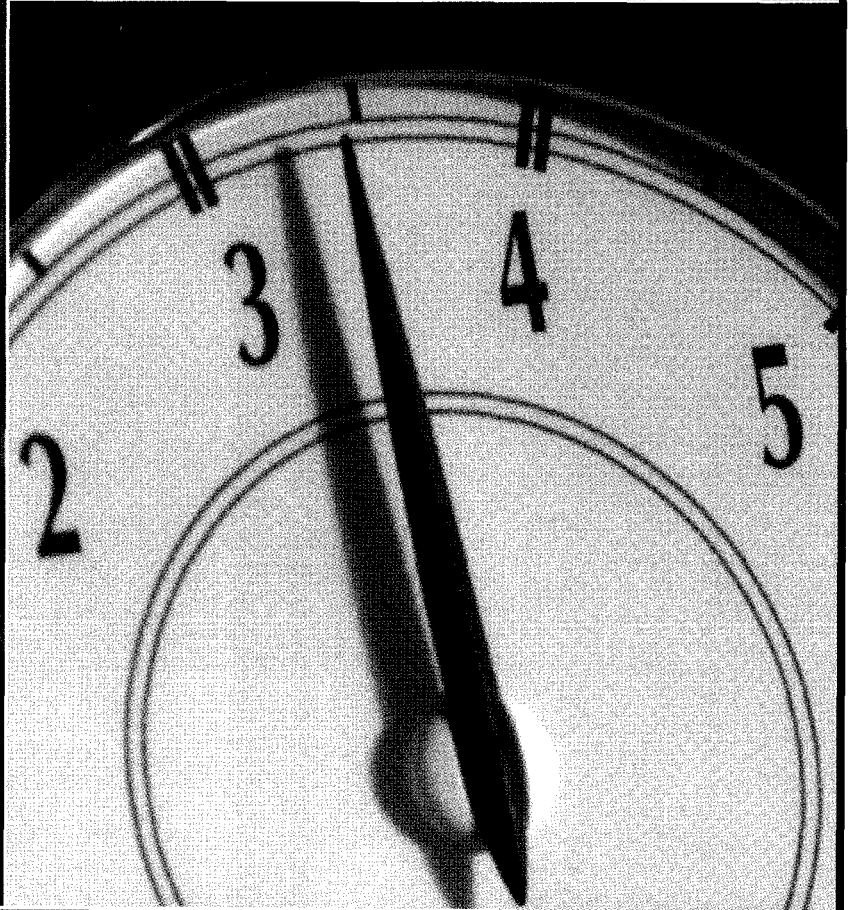
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Drive Love

POPULAR MUSIC & JAZZ

by Bob Blumenthal and Charles M. Young

A TRIO'S PROGRESS

When Brad Mehldau released *The Art of the Trio, Volume 1*, in 1996, the title seemed presumptuous for a twenty-six-year-old pianist who had only one previous album to his credit. Yet Mehldau was blessed with two partners, the bassist Larry Grenadier and the drummer Jorge Rossy, who could alternately track and parry his complex harmonic tangents and darting rhythmic impulses; and together they created an ensemble profile that quickly distanced them from such oft-cited models as the trios of Bill Evans and Keith Jarrett. A distinct air of

intellectual challenge surrounds Mehldau's music, as one might expect from someone who named his publishing company Werther and quotes the likes of Rilke and Rorty in liner notes; yet his group quickly revealed a capacity to connect with its audiences that has grown over time. *Progression* (Warner Brothers) is the fifth volume in Mehldau's *Art of the Trio* series, and, like two of its predecessors, was recorded in live performance. The two-disc set reveals a more concentrated, tightly coiled group sound and a lighter pulse than its predecessors,

with lyricism bubbling to the surface in a less brooding spirit. Mehldau, Grenadier, and Rossy do not hesitate to remold venerable material such as "Alone Together" and "Long Ago and Far Away" into extended fantasies with fluid contours. They also include ballads with reflective unaccompanied piano at their centers, originals that unfold in bright surges, and a more resolute version of "River Man" than the one heard on *Songs* (volume three) which retains the haunted quality of composer Nick Drake's sepulchral original. —B.B.

ALLSTAR BOOGIE

The North Mississippi Allstars know how to boogie. That could be the entire review, except that it doesn't convey nearly enough enthusiasm. The North Mississippi Allstars really, really, *really* know how to boogie. Even ten more *reallys* would not convey sufficient enthusiasm for their de profundis grasp of all that is boogosity. You could have a *really* for every sand grain in the Ganges and it would be but a miniscule fraction of the thousands of millions of

billions of *reallys* it would take to register the merest blip on the Official Boog-o-meter that registers the North Mississippi Allstars as one hundred and doesn't register all other musicians because they are unworthy to appear on the same Official Boog-o-meter. Imagine R. L. Burnside crossed with ZZ Top crossed with the early Yardbirds crossed with four or five of your favorite garage bands from 1966 and give them all high SAT scores. Even that doesn't convey it, but it'll have to do. After a first album of mostly classic blues covers last year, brothers Luther and Cody Dickinson step forth on *51 Phantom* (Tone-Cool) as great songwriters and arrangers, beating their riffs to death and then beating another riff to death at just the right moment. They have that rock-and-roll sense of if-it-sounds-good-play-it-again, and that early blues sense of it's-got-to-swing—and that's boogie. Produced by their father, Jim Dickinson (Ry Cooder, the Replacements, Mud Boy and the Neutrons), the album has guitar tone for miles, guitar tone that large pharmaceutical companies should bottle and overcharge for, because it cures all that ails your internal organs. Boogie on. Really. —C.M.Y.



THE NORTH MISSISSIPPI ALLSTARS

A WAY WITH WORDS

Dan Bern has such a sharp sense of humor that some of his songs teeter on the edge of being novelty singles. On *New American Language* (Messenger Records), his fourth album, he dresses up his lyrics with first-rate production and achieves something worthy of the adjective Dylanesque, as opposed to Dr. Demento-esque. His voice is quite Dylanesque in its phrasing, though less nasal and more agreeable, but it mostly comes in the way his wit subordinates to the song, and not vice versa. That's the way it

ought to be, because he writes wonderful, surreal songs assembled from the detritus of American popular culture and intense personal experience. His melodies ain't bad, either. Under all that nicely turned language and music, Bern keeps returning to the theme of violence, as if surreptitiously wiggling a sore tooth. "Commandment Three says Do Not Kill / Amendment Two says Blood Will Spill," he sings in his epic "Alaska Highway." It's a funny song about meeting Leonardo DiCaprio and Eminem and a whole series of unlikely celebrities on a journey north to ecstasy while enduring the pain of the many contradictions of American culture. Bern has the sensitivity to be appalled by the violence we do to ourselves—physical, verbal, and economic—but manages to dance around it instead of wallowing. His other epic "Thanksgiving Day Parade" closes the album on a liberating note reminiscent of "Like a Rolling Stone," promising joy, for a moment at least, in full awareness of mortality. A musician can't deliver anything more. —C.M.Y.

BOB BLUMENTHAL IS A JAZZ CRITIC FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE. CHARLES M. YOUNG REVIEWS MUSIC FOR PLAYBOY AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS AND FOR ALLMUSIC.COM.

FILM

by Ella Taylor

LINE OF FIRE

Absurdist black comedy has become the currency of Bosnian filmmakers' efforts to address the tragedy of their recurring wars, and Danis Tanović's *No Man's Land* is no exception. The movie unfolds in the heavy stillness of a lovely summer day, counterpointed by the hair-trigger tempers of two soldiers, a Bosnian and a Serb (played by Branko Djurić and Rene Bitorajac), who are trapped in a trench between enemy lines during the Bosnian war. A third soldier, whom they'd taken for dead, lies wounded in the trench, atop a bomb spring-loaded to explode if he moves an inch. Complicating the standoff are a French UN sergeant (Georges Siatidis) who's trying to help despite orders from on high to stay out of it, and an aggressive British television journalist (Katrin Cartlidge, giving an amusing imitation of CNN reporter Christiane Amanpour) who threatens to expose the inaction of the United Nations Protection Forces (UNPROFOR). Tanović adroitly manipulates the movie's pacing to reflect the surreally disjunctive patterns of a war between former neighbors which has escaped the control of all its factions. *No Man's Land* has an intimacy and immediacy that enlists our sympathies for both sides. That is its strength, and also its weakness. Like so many well-meaning makers of antiwar films, Tanović shows himself unwilling to grapple with the specifics of this particular war, or to point the finger at anyone but—rather irrelevantly—a clownish UNPROFOR bigwig (Simon Callow) whose only goal is to rock no boats and maintain the burnished image of his organization.



MARISA TOMEI, SISSY SPACEK, AND CHRISTOPHER ADAMS, IN *IN THE BEDROOM*

GRIEF PROCESS

If the loss of a child is one of the worst things that can happen to someone, it can be one of the best things that can happen to the box office of a movie on the subject. *In the Bedroom*, a feature debut by the actor Todd Field, was a runaway hit with audiences at both the Sundance and Toronto film festivals this year, and I'll be surprised if the film doesn't do brisk art-house business. The first hour of this

quiet study in human behavior under pressure establishes, detail by small detail, the small-town life of an ordinary Maine couple (played by Sissy Spacek and the English actor Tom Wilkinson) and their only son (Nick Stahl), who's spending his summer earning money as a lobsterman to pay for graduate school, while romancing a local single mother (Marisa Tomei). The second hour examines how the family unravels when the son suddenly dies under horrifying circumstances. *In the Bedroom* fairly oozes sincerity: the acting is good; the cinematography is lush with a graceful sense of place; the direction is sensitive almost to a fault. Yet the drama labors under a screenplay (by Rob Festinger and Field, adapted from a story by Andre Dubus) full of expository topic sentences and clinical-psychological bromides. There's something predictable and orderly about the evolving marital pain, as if the movie were doggedly following a therapy manual on the stages of grief. The movie proceeds with a studied tastefulness that renders preposterous the florid final act of a soap opera scrambling to remake itself as a thriller.

SPANISH SPECTERS

Even moviegoers with no particular sympathy for gothic horror can't fail to be stirred by *The Devil's Backbone*, a political allegory clothed in a ghost story, cowritten and directed by the Mexican filmmaker Guillermo del Toro (who made the haunting 1992 horror film *Cronos*) under the producing wing of Spanish director Pedro Almodóvar. Set in the dying days of the Spanish civil war in an austere school for orphans of Republican activists and militia, the movie centers on a new pupil, Carlos (Fernando Tielve), who finds himself trapped in the vortex of simmering internal conflicts that echo those in the world outside. Troubled by encounters with the ghost of a boy who was brutally murdered in the school, Carlos also finds himself at the mercy of the bullying

leader of the boys, and of the handsome, sinister young caretaker (Eduardo Noriega), a former pupil consumed by an unspecified rage and bitterness toward the school that took him in. Like the unexploded bomb that sits in the school courtyard, the school is an inferno waiting to happen, and when Carlos finds unlikely allies to help him delve into the school's murky secrets, its fragile harmony erupts into civil war. Sensitively directed by del Toro and lit with the livid radiance of a sick society by cinematographer Guillermo Navarro, the movie elaborates with terrifying intelligence and mournful poetry the idea of the ghost as "a tragedy condemned to repeat itself again and again."

ELLA TAYLOR IS A FILM CRITIC FOR *LA WEEKLY*.

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In December, the A&E Network is pleased to present *The Nutcracker*, in two parts (December 16, 8:00-10:00 A.M., and December 23, 8:00-10:00 A.M.). This version of *The Nutcracker* introduces a plot written by Erik Naslund, based on short stories by E. T. A. Hoffman and Elsa Beskow. Choreographed by Par Isberg, it features more than sixty Swedish Royal Opera Ballet dancers. Chrysler is pleased to sponsor *Breakfast With the Arts* and this edition of the Arts & Entertainment Preview.

NOTES & DISPATCHES

WASHINGTON, D.C.

SQUISHIER THAN THOU

*Demonstrating against reality in
London and Washington*

BY P. J. O'ROURKE

.....

Traveling to London from Washington twelve days after the terrorist attack, I expected security measures. I'd been told to arrive at Dulles Airport three hours before departure. I was ready for checkpoints where people in flak jackets would use mirrors to look for bombs under cars—although with automotive electronics and the puzzle plumbing of emissions control, everything under cars looks like a bomb. Anyway, the checkpoints weren't there.

At the ticket counter, instead of being asked once "Hasyourluggage-beenunderyourcontrolatalltimes?," I was asked twice. The metal detectors and x-ray machines were operated by the usual dim but friendly minimum-wage security guards, now somewhat less friendly. I was told to hand over my disposable lighter, to prevent, I suppose, any threat of "Do what I say or I'll light this Marlboro and you'll all die—in thirty years, owing to inhalation of secondhand smoke."

I headed cheerlessly to the designated smoking area, expecting to find a room full of desperate, fireless people paying black-market prices for Nicorette. Everyone was smoking. I asked for a light, and someone produced a disposable lighter. It seems that if you went through one of the airport's two security portals, you were made to surrender all lighters and matches. But if you went through the other ...

Concern has been voiced that fear of terrorism could lead to renewed racial profiling. Never mind that the languages of the Taliban—Pashto and Dari—are part

of the Indo-European linguistic family, and that if "Caucasian" has any meaning at all, Afghans have a better claim to it than Hungarians or Finns.

The profiling at the boarding gate couldn't be called racial, exactly. The ruddy and the pallid were ushered directly onboard, as were the sufficiently black. It was the tanned or swarthy who had to line up for additional questioning. On my flight these included, as far as I could tell, some Hindus, some Filipinos, a Hispanic or two, and a pair of elderly Iranian women wearing chadors in violation of America's new no-unusual-things-on-your-head taboo, which has brought grief to Sikhs in the U.S. hinterland. (Not that there hasn't been Sikh terrorism, but it was directed against Indira Gandhi, in retaliation for the Indian army's storming the Golden Temple at Amritsar. This isn't an issue at the moment, but the complexities of building an international coalition against terrorism could be illustrated if India demands a wholesale revocation of Sikh cab licenses in New York, thereby bringing that city to a halt again.)

An English friend asked me, Would a bald chap who was sunburned and gardening and put a tea towel on his head be in trouble in America?

My plane was two-thirds empty. But the unflappable British flight crew was unflapped. I was not subjected to the indignity that an acquaintance suffered on a flight from New York to Chicago. He was made to press the flight-attendant call button and identify himself before being allowed to go to the bathroom. This—for a drinking man in the enlarged-prostate years—is a serious violation of civil rights.

The people I know in London were in the same state of shock and anger as the people I know in America. And, like my American friends, they weren't

particularly frightened of a second terrorist strike or of poison gas or germ warfare. But this may be a matter of being old smokers and drinkers, at an age for cardiac arrest and malignancy, with children they'd like to see grow up or at least get a damn job, and retirement funds that have gone to hell in the past year. How much more frightening can life get?

The Brits, however, were more likely to raise the subject of the IRA and say a word about America's leading the fight against terrorism while letting the NORAD cans be passed in the bars of Southie and the Bronx. I blamed the Kennedys—always a safe course when questions of bad U.S. political policies are raised. Meanwhile, it's the British themselves who are at the negotiating table with my moron cousins from Ulster. Personally, I'd start the war on terrorism with Gerry Adams. At least we know where he is.

Incidentally, it's ridiculous if you're Irish to claim that you can't fathom the mindset behind the wild destruction of innocents, the casual self-murder, and the bathos of martyrdom on September 11. Al Qaeda no doubt has a Yeats of its own—"A terrible beauty is born."

But there was something going on in Great Britain that was squishier than Northern Ireland home-rule concessions. The September 17 issue of *The New Statesman* ran an amazing editorial leader.

Look at the picture on pages 6-7, showing Americans running in terror from the New York explosions and then ask yourself how often in the past (particularly in Vietnam and more recently in Iraq) you have seen people running in terror from American firepower. American bond traders, you may say, are as innocent and as undeserving of terror as Vietnamese or Iraqi peasants. Well, yes and no.

To quote more might set off a wave of

retribution in America against people wearing derby hats.

I had dinner with the critic and television commentator Clive James and his assistant. The assistant was an able and well-educated young woman who could not be convinced by Clive that in the matter of moral values there was such a thing as a superior culture. "They cover their women in the ballroom drapes!" Clive said. "Your dad can have you stoned to death for not marrying some old goat!"

"I wouldn't call it an inferior culture," his assistant said.

"What about Somalia?! What about clitorectomies?!"

"Of course I'm a feminist," his assistant said. "But I resist the idea of an inferior culture."

It's usually Clive and I who have the arguments. He's a liberal democrat. But he's my age; he remembers when the whole point of being on the left was the effort (alas, misplaced) to forge a superior culture.

I was a guest on a BBC phone-in talk show. If the world is mad at America for anything, it should be for the invention of the phone-in talk show. The idea of a news broadcast once was to find someone with information and broadcast it. The idea now is to find someone with ignorance and spread it around. (Being ignorant myself, I'm not mad personally.)

A woman named Rhona called and said we didn't have enough empathy for the poor people in the world. We're so rich and they're so poor, no wonder they're angry.

I told her that was a slur on poor people. And anyway, Osama bin Laden is a rich twit.

Rhona said that we are so wealthy and materialistic and they are so deprived. "Here I am," she said, "just an ordinary suburban housewife in a semi-detached, and I'm surrounded by all

these things I don't need." Privately I was thinking that my moron cousins from Ulster could fix that with breaking and entering. I said, "You're arguing completely beside the point." She was employing a fallacy of relevance, specifically *argumentum ad misericordiam*. (Although I had to look that up later; what I said on the radio was "So what?")

Rhona accused me of that most grievous of modern sins, especially when committed against a woman by a middle-aged man. "Don't patronize me," she said.

Calls and e-mails were nine to one in Rhona's favor, but one stalwart sent this message: "I suspect why ninety per-



cent of callers are not in favor of PJ's opinions is because they are out of work socialists who have nothing better to do but phone radio stations."

And there is squishiness in the United States. Back in Washington, I went to a peace rally on September 29 at Freedom Plaza, near the White House. Several thousand people attended. As I arrived, a man on the speaker's platform was saying, "We cannot permit the President of our country to claim there are only two forces—good and evil. We are not with either."

The Bread and Puppet theater troupe was carrying a score of what appeared to be eight-foot-high papier-mâché baked potatoes. Asked what this was about, one of the troupe said it represented "naked people being oppressed by clothed people." Asked again, she said the same thing.

Members of another performing-arts group were wearing cardboard bird heads and flapping bed sheets. They said they were "the cranes of peace."

A woman asked for signatures on a petition in favor of affirmative action. The National Youth Rights Association had set up a card table with a sign reading LOWER THE DRINKING AGE. Snappy protest rhymes seemed as yet inchoate. Drumming and pogo dancing accompanied the chant "Stop the war/ In Afghanistan/ While we/ Still can!"

Another speaker came to the podium and said, "Let us bomb the world with housing." One of those McMansions with the lawyer foyer and the cathedral-ceilinged great room could do real damage.

Vegetarian demonstrators carried large banners illustrated with vegetables. A carrot was captioned "Intelligence." Placards in the crowd read KILLING IS BAD, POVERTY IS TERRIBLE TOO; ABOLISH MONEY FOR A WORLD OF SHARING; and CONGRESS PLEASE KEEP A COOL HEAD. One young man wore a headband scrawled with VICTORY 4 CHECHNYA. Another carried a black-and-red ensign that he said stood for "anarcho-syndicalism," a word I didn't think had been spoken aloud since *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. "Do you work for the police?" the standard-bearer asked. My work-shirt-and-chinos liberal disguise had proved ineffective.

A child of nine or ten, wearing a F**K WAR T-shirt without the asterisks, harangued some police officers. The officers could not keep straight faces. Most of the other demonstrators were of college age, with subdermal ink, transdermal hardware, and haircuts from the barber college on Mars. But people my age were present too, and beginning to resemble Bertrand Russell, especially the women. Then I saw him: a hippie in a walker wearing a hearing aid. Sic transit generation gap.

Demonstrators tried to burn an American flag. They had trouble lighting it. Maybe their matches had been taken by airport security—or maybe all the anti-smoking propaganda aimed at the young has come home to roost in a lack of fire-making skills. When the flag at last caught flame, a passerby shoved his way into the crowd. He was a normal-looking man without great height or bulk. He began to throw punches. He was set upon by twenty-five or thirty of the ... anarcho-syndicalists, I guess. There was a momentary geyser of funny clothes, odd hairstyles, and flopping tattooed limbs. The normal-looking man emerged, slightly winded, carrying the remains of the flag and having received a small scuff on the forehead.

NEW YORK CITY
**STRANGER IN
 A STRANGE LAND**

*The dismay of an honest and
 honorable man of the left*

BY CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

.....

October 6, the day immediately preceding the first U.S. counter-stroke against the Taliban and Osama bin Laden, found me on a panel at the New York Film Festival. The discussion, on the art of political cinema, had been arranged many months before. But as the chairman announced, the events of September 11 would now provide the atmospheric conditioning for our deliberations. I thus sat on a stage with Oliver Stone, who spoke with feeling about something he termed “the revolt of September 11,” and with bell hooks, who informed a well-filled auditorium of the Lincoln Center that those who had experienced Spike Lee’s movie about the bombing of a Birmingham, Alabama, church in 1963 would understand that “state terrorism” was nothing new in America.

These were not off-the-cuff observations. I challenged Stone to reconsider his view of the immolation of the World Trade Center as a “revolt.” He ignored me. Later he added that this rebellion would soon be joined by the anti-globalization forces of the Seattle

protesters. When he was asked by a member of the audience to comment on the applause for the September 11 massacres in Arab streets and camps, he responded that the French Revolution, too, had been greeted by popular enthusiasm.

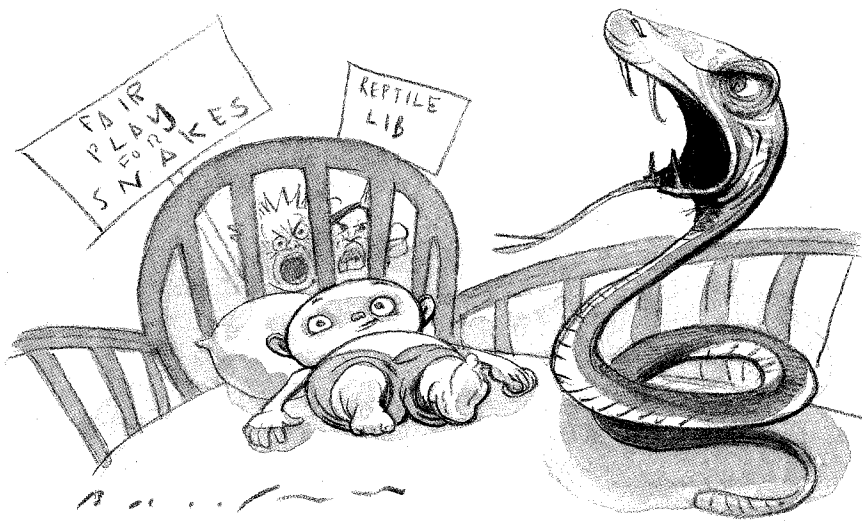
Although those who don’t read *The Nation*, the *New Statesman*, and the *London Review of Books*, and who haven’t come across Susan Sontag’s disdainful geopolitical analysis in the pages of *The New Yorker*, may not be aware of it, these views are, sadly, not uncommon on the political left. Indeed, I would surmise that audience approval of Stone’s and hooks’s propositions was something near fifty-fifty. Clapping and hissing are feeble and fickle indicators, true. At different times, in combating both Stone and hooks, I got my own fair share of each. But let’s say that three weeks after a mass murder had devastated the downtown district, and at a moment when the miasma from the site could still be felt and smelled, a ticket-buying audience of liberal New Yorkers awarded blame more or less evenhandedly between the members of al Qaeda and the directors of U.S. foreign policy. (And not just of foreign policy: Stone drew applause for his assertion that there was an intimate tie between the New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington attacks and the Florida ballot recount, which was, he asserted, “a complete vindication of the fact that capitalism has destroyed democracy.”)

By this time I was entering my twenty-sixth day of active and engaged antagonism toward this sort of talk, or thought, and was impressed despite myself by the realization that I was the first person Stone and hooks and some audience members appeared to have met who did not agree with them. Or perhaps I should rephrase that: I was the first person on the political left they had met who did not echo or ratify their view. As it happens, I know enough about Marxism, for example, to state without overmuch reservation that capitalism, for all its contradictions, is superior to feudalism and serfdom, which is what bin Laden and the Taliban stand for. (Stone, when I put this

to him after the event, retorted that his father had spent many years on Wall Street, and thus he knew the topic quite well.)

Having paged through the combined reactions of Sontag, Noam Chomsky, and many others, I am put very much in mind of something from the opening of Marx’s *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. It’s not the sentence about the historical relation between tragedy and farce. It’s the observation that when people are learning a new language, they habitually translate it back into the one they already know. This work of self-reassurance and of hectic, hasty assimilation to the familiar is most marked in the case of Chomsky, whose prose now manifests that symptom first captured in, I recall, words by Dr. Charcot—“*le beau calme de l’hystérique*.” For Chomsky, everything these days is a “truism”; for him it verges on the platitudinous to be obliged to state, once again for those who may have missed it, that the September 11 crime is a mere bagatelle when set beside the offenses of the Empire. From this it’s not a very big step to the conclusion that we must change the subject, and change it at once, to Palestine or East Timor or Angola or Iraq. All radical polemic may now proceed as it did before the rude interruption. “Nothing new,” as the spin doctors have taught us to say. There’s a distinct similarity between this world view and that of the religious dogmatists who regard September 11 in the light of a divine judgment on a sinful society. But to know even what a newspaper reader knows about the Taliban and its zealous destruction of all culture and all science and all human emancipation, and to compare its most noteworthy if not its most awful atrocity to the fall of the Bastille ...

I take a trawl through my e-mail and my mailbag. “Why sing the ‘Battle Hymn of the Republic’? Don’t they know John Brown was the first terrorist?” ... “What about the civilian casualties in Vietnam, Guatemala, Gaza [fill in as necessary] ...?” This goes on all day, and it goes on while I sleep, so that I open a new batch each morning.



Everyone writes to me as if he or she were bravely making a point for the very first time it had ever been made. And so I ask myself, in the spirit of self-criticism that I am enjoining upon these reflexive correspondents, whether I have any responsibility for this dismal tide of dreary traffic, this mob of pseudo-refugees taking shelter in half-baked moral equivalence. Professor Chomsky's preferred comparative case study is Bill Clinton's rocketing of a pharmaceutical factory in Sudan in 1998—a piece of promiscuous violence that took an uncounted number of African lives as part of Clinton's effort to “look presidential” (and also one of many fainthearted earlier attempts to “target” Osama bin Laden). At the time, I wrote several columns denouncing the atrocity, and the racism and cynicism that lay behind it. I also denounced the vileness of the public enthusiasm for the raid, which I think was at least comparable to the gloating of the dispossessed and the stateless over September 11. Now I get all this thrown back at me by people who didn't read it on the first occasion and who appear to believe that only Chomsky has the civic courage to bring the raid up. (He didn't bring it up at the time.) Kipling is back in fashion these days, because of the North-West Frontier, so when I ask myself the question, I also allow myself this couplet from *If*, in which we are asked, “If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken, / Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools ...”

It is perfectly true that most Americans were somewhat indifferent to the outside world as it was before September 11, and also highly ignorant of it—a point on which the self-blaming faction insists. While attention was elsewhere, a deadly and irreconcilable enemy was laying plans and training recruits. This enemy—unless we are to flatter him by crediting his own propaganda—cares no more for the wretched of the West Bank than did Saddam Hussein when he announced that the road to Palestine and Jerusalem led through Kuwait and Kurdistan. But a lethal and remorseless foe is a troubling thing in more than one way. Not only may he wish you harm; he may force you to think and to act. And these responsibilities—because thinking and acting are responsibilities—may be disconcerting. The ancient Greeks were so impressed and terrified by the Furies that they re-baptized them the Eumenides—“the Kindly Ones”—the better to adjust to them. Members of the left, along with the far larger number of squishy “progressives,” have grossly failed to live up to their responsibility to think; rather, they are merely reacting, substituting tired slogans for thought. The majority of those “progressives” who take comfort from Stone and Chomsky are not committed, militant anti-imperialists or anti-capitalists. Nothing so muscular. They are of the sort who, discovering a viper in the bed of their child, would place the first call to People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.

I believe I can prove this by means

of a brief rhetorical experiment. It runs as follows. Very well, I will stipulate that September 11 was revenge for past American crimes. Specifically, and with supporting detail, I will agree that it was revenge for the crime of past indifference to, and collusion with, the Taliban. May we now agree to cancel this crime by removing from the Taliban the power of enslavement that it exerts over Afghans, and which it hopes to extend? Dead silence from progressives. Couldn't we talk about the ozone layer instead? In other words, all the learned and conscientious objections, as well as all the silly or sinister ones, boil down to this: Nothing will make us fight against an evil if that fight forces us to go to the same corner as our own government. (The words “our own” should of course be appropriately ironized, with the necessary quotation marks.) To do so would be a betrayal of the Cherokees.

Some part of this is at least intelligible. My daughter goes to school just across the river from the Pentagon; her good-hearted teachers proposed an “Amity Walk” for children of all nations, to culminate at the statue of Mahatma Gandhi on Massachusetts Avenue. The event would demonstrate that children had no quarrel with anybody. It would not stress the fact that a death squad had just hit a target a few hundred yards away, and would have liked to crash another planeload of hostages anywhere in downtown Washington, and was thwarted in this only by civilians willing to use desperate force. But I had my own reasons, which were no less internationalist, for opposing anything so dismal, and for keeping my child away from anything so inane. I didn't like General Westmoreland or Colonel North or General Pinochet, and I have said more about this than some people. (I did not, like Oliver Stone, become rich or famous by romancing Camelot or by making an unwatchable three-hour movie showing Nixon's and Kissinger's human and vulnerable sides.) I detest General Sharon, and have done so for many years. My face is set against religious and racial demagogues. I believe I know an enemy when I see one. My chief concern when faced with such an antagonist is not that there

will be “over-reaction” on the part of those who will fight the adversary—which seems to be the only thing about the recent attacks and the civilized world’s response to them that makes the left anxious.

At his best, Noam Chomsky used to insist that there was a distinction to be drawn between state crimes and insurgent crimes, or between the violence of the emperor and the violence of the pirate. The Taliban–bin Laden alliance is a horrific and novel blend of the two. It employs the methods of the anarchist and the rebel in one declension, being surreptitious and covert and relying on the drama of the individual “martyr.” But it also draws on the support of police and military and financial systems, and on the base indulgence of certain established and well-funded religious and theocratic leaderships. It throws acid in the faces of unveiled women. It destroys and burns museums and libraries. (Do we need to submit to our own guilt to “understand” this?) It is an elemental challenge, still terrifying even when one appreciates the appalling fact that its program of medieval stultification cannot actually be realized but will nevertheless be fought for. How contemptible it is, and how lowering to the spirit, that America’s liberals should have cried so loudly before they had even been hurt, and that they should have been able to be so stoic only when ignoring the cries of others.

GAZA CITY

ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE

How the terrorists stopped terrorism

BY BRUCE HOFFMAN

.....

“Do you want to know how to eliminate terrorism? I’ll tell you. In fact, I’ll tell you about something that no one else knows. Something that has never been written about. You will be amazed, but it is true. Listen.”

The speaker knew what he was talking about. Just a few years before, he had been a terrorist—a senior commander of al-Fatah, the largest constituent element of the Palestine Liberation

Organization and the group that was founded, in 1959, and has been led ever since by Yasir Arafat, the chairman of the PLO. The speaker was now a brigadier general in one of the Palestine Authority’s myriad security and intelligence services. He was an Arafat loyalist: his fidelity as much as his competence led to his appointment to this critically important post. We spoke when an uneasy peace still reigned between Israel and the Palestinians, and in fact there was a degree of cooperation between the Israeli intelligence and security agencies and their Palestinian counterparts, which was superintended by the CIA.

Ironically, the general’s job was hunting down and rooting out terrorists. He was the archetypal poacher turned gamekeeper. His nemeses were neither the Jews nor their Zionist benefactors but his brother Palestinians: men who, unlike him, had refused to swear allegiance to *al Rais* (“the head,” as Arafat is often known among Palestinians) and the governing Palestine Authority. These men, moreover, were imbued with religious fervor and the unswerving belief that armed struggle was decreed by Allah and justified by the Koran. They belonged to a new generation of Palestinians, who had joined more-recently established terrorist groups such as Hamas (the Arabic acronym for the Islamic Resistance Movement) and the Palestine Islamic Jihad, and whose struggles were directed as much against what they saw as the corrupt and reprobate Palestine Authority as against their most reviled enemy, Israel.

We had been sitting in the general’s office, above a sweltering prison in Gaza City, talking and drinking sweet coffee. The general was in mufti. He wore a blue suit, a light-blue shirt, and a blue-and-gold necktie. He looked like a middle-class businessman or an avuncular pharmacist. His office was sparsely decorated. On the wall behind his desk was a photograph of Arafat with his familiar stubble, attired in green military fatigues and wearing his trademark black-and-white *kuffiyeh* (Arab head scarf). On the desk was a picture of the general himself, standing beside Arafat

and looking very serious. Along the wall, on a side table, were framed photographs of each of the general’s children, greeting or being hugged by Arafat, who appeared the kindly, elderly patron paying a surprise visit to commemorate a birthday or celebrate some other noteworthy family event.

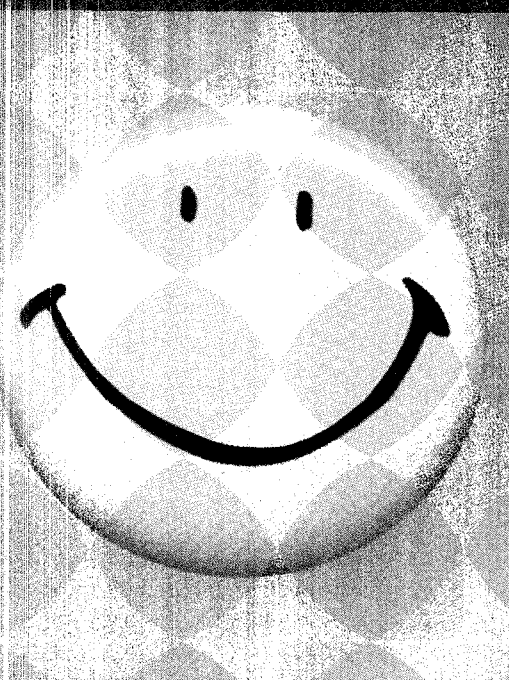
“Arafat and the PLO,” the general said, “had a big problem in the 1970s. We had a group called the Black September Organization. It was the most elite unit we had. The members were suicidal—not in the sense of religious terrorists who surrender their lives to ascend to heaven but in the sense that we could send them anywhere to do anything and they were prepared to lay down their lives to do it. No question. No hesitation. They were absolutely dedicated and absolutely ruthless.”

Black September was at the time among the most feared terrorist organizations in the world. It had been formed as a deniable and completely covert special-operations unit of al-Fatah by Arafat and his closest lieutenants following the brutal expulsion of the Palestinians from Jordan in September of 1970—the event from which the group’s name was derived. Black September’s mission, however, was not simply to exact retribution on Jordan but to catapult the Palestinians and their cause onto the world’s agenda.

Black September’s first operation was the assassination, in November of 1971, of Jordan’s Prime Minister Wasfi al-Tal, who was gunned down as he entered the lobby of the Sheraton Hotel in Cairo. While Tal lay dying, one of the assassins knelt and lapped with his tongue the blood flowing across the marble floor. That grisly scene, reported in *The Times* of London and other major newspapers, created an image of uncompromising violence and determination that was exactly what Arafat both wanted and needed.

He doubtless succeeded beyond his expectations in September of 1972, when Black September perpetrated one of the most audacious acts of terrorism in history: the seizure of Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympic Games. That incident is widely credited as the premier example of terrorism’s power

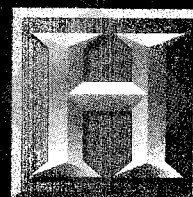
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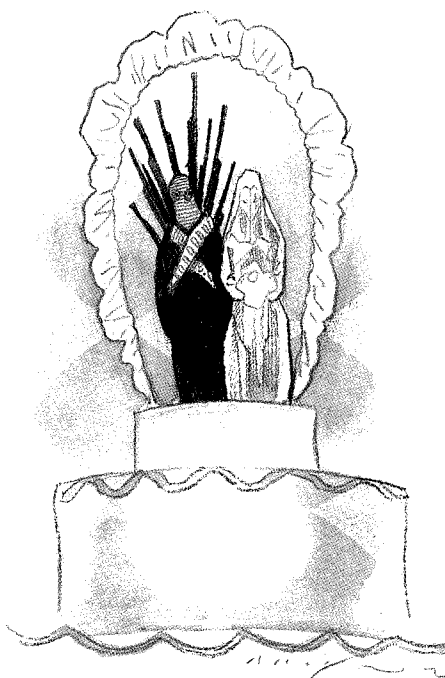
to rocket a cause from obscurity to renown. The operation's purpose was to capture the world's attention by striking at a target of inestimable value (in this case a country's star athletes) in a setting calculated to provide the terrorists with unparalleled exposure and publicity. According to Abu Iyad, the PLO's intelligence and security chief, a longtime Arafat confidant, and a co-founder of al-Fatah, the Black September terrorists "didn't bring about the liberation of any of their comrades imprisoned in Israel as they had hoped, but they did attain the operation's other two objectives: World opinion was forced to take note of the Palestinian drama, and the Palestinian people imposed their presence on an international gathering that had sought to exclude them." Just over two years later Arafat was invited to address the UN General Assembly, and shortly afterward the PLO was granted special observer status in that international body.

The problem, however, was that Black September had served its purpose. The PLO and its chairman had the recognition and acceptance they craved. Indeed, any continuation of these terrorist activities, ironically, now threatened to undermine all that had been achieved. In short, Black September was, suddenly, not a deniable asset but a potential liability. Thus, according to my host, Arafat ordered Abu Iyad "to turn Black September off." My host, who was one of Abu Iyad's most trusted deputies, was charged with devising a solution. For months both men thought of various ways to solve the Black September problem, discussing and debating what they could possibly do, short of killing all these young men, to stop them from committing further acts of terror.

Finally they hit upon an idea. Why not simply marry them off? In other words, why not find a way to give these men—the most dedicated, competent, and implacable fighters in the entire PLO—a reason to live rather than to die? Having failed to come up with any viable alternatives, the two men put their plan in motion.

They traveled to Palestinian refu-

gee camps, to PLO offices and associated organizations, and to the capitals of all Middle Eastern countries with large Palestinian communities. Systematically identifying the most attractive young Palestinian women they could find, they put before these women what they hoped would be an irresistible proposition: Your fatherland needs you. Will you accept a critical mission of the utmost importance to the Palestinian people? Will you come to Beirut, for a reason to be disclosed upon your arrival, but one decreed by no higher authority than Chairman Arafat himself? How could a true patriot refuse?



So approximately a hundred of these beautiful young women were brought to Beirut. There, in a sort of PLO version of a college mixer, boy met girl, boy fell in love with girl, boy would, it was hoped, marry girl. There was an additional incentive, designed to facilitate not just amorous connections but long-lasting relationships. The hundred or so Black Septemberists were told that if they married these women, they would be paid \$3,000; given an apartment in Beirut with a gas stove, a refrigerator, and a television; and employed by the PLO in some nonviolent capacity. Any of these couples that had a baby within a year

would be rewarded with an additional \$5,000.

Both Abu Iyad and the future general worried that their scheme would never work. But, as the general recounted, without exception the Black Septemberists fell in love, got married, settled down, and in most cases started a family. To make sure that none ever strayed, the two men devised a test. Periodically, the former terrorists would be handed legitimate passports and asked to go to the organization's offices in Geneva or Paris or some other city on genuine nonviolent PLO business. But, the general explained, not one of them would agree to travel abroad, for fear of being arrested and losing all that they had—that is, being deprived of their wives and children. "And so," my host told me, "that is how we shut down Black September and eliminated terrorism. It is the only successful case that I know of."

In the years since, as terrorism has itself become more egregiously lethal and destructive, seemingly more intractable and unrelenting, I have thought often of that story, and I suspect that it is a less far-fetched plan for combating terrorism than it at first seems. The authorities in Northern Ireland, for example, pursued a somewhat similar strategy during the years before the current cease-fire. Hard-core IRA and Loyalist terrorists serving long prison sentences were often given brief furloughs during holiday periods. The men to whom this privilege was accorded were carefully selected. They were mostly in their thirties, and therefore at a time in their lives when the perceived immortality of youth has been superseded by the dawning realization of death's inevitability, if not for themselves, then certainly for their parents.

Once at home with their families, these men, as the authorities had correctly calculated, developed a keen appreciation of elderly parents whom they might never see again once they were returned to prison, and also of children growing up too fast and of still young and attractive wives wasting their lives waiting. When the men returned to prison, they were asked if they would be interested in an expedit-

ed release. The Northern Ireland Office relied on a combination of factors to wean these men from terrorism: family pressure to forsake violence and secure an early release and the men's having seen with their own eyes how much the province had changed. To qualify for this form of parole, the men were required to move out of segregated prison wings (where they lived with only fellow IRA or Loyalist prisoners) and into fully integrated cell blocks, where Protestants and Catholics mixed freely—and nonviolently. This was a critical first step on the road to parole, followed by vocational training (not provided in segregated wings), counseling, and more-frequent family visits and furloughs. No one who had taken advantage of this opportunity for early parole ever returned to violence or to prison. The program was so successful that the option could be offered to only a limited number of prisoners, lest the terrorist organizations, fearing the loss of too many senior veterans and commanders, forbid their members to participate in the program. To a great extent, accordingly, the climate of peace that emerged in Northern Ireland in the mid-1990s may have owed as much to the creativity and foresight of the Northern Ireland Prison Service as to the political dexterity and visions of Gerry Adams and David Trimble or Martin McGuinness and Senator George Mitchell.

The lesson here is not that the United States should host a series of mixers in the Arab world in hopes of encouraging the young men of al Qaeda or other terrorist organizations to forsake violence and embrace family life. Rather, the lesson is that clever, creative thinking can sometimes achieve unimaginable ends. Indeed, rather than concentrating on eliminating organizations, as we mostly do in our approach to countering terrorism, we should perhaps focus at least some of our attention on weaning individuals from violence. It could hardly be any less effective than many of the countermeasures that have long been applied to terrorism—with ephemeral, if not often nugatory, results.

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POLICE POWERS*How the IRA leverages
the peace process*

BY CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN

.....

In his post-September 11 address to a joint session of Congress, President George W. Bush singled out terrorist organizations with "global reach" as America's enemy in the new war on terrorism. Until just weeks before the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon the IRA would not have been thought to possess such reach. But in August came the news that suspected IRA activists had been charged with training guerrilla forces for many weeks in Colombia in the use of explosives—to be employed against the Colombian government, the recipient of considerable U.S. aid, financial and military, as an ally in the U.S. war on drug traffickers. Sinn Féin, the political voice of the IRA, denied all knowledge of this foray in global reach, but American officials made it known that they did not believe the disclaimers and called on the IRA to discontinue all activities in South America. "Any collaboration with the FARC by any individual or organization is of utmost concern to us," said Phillip Reeker, a State Department spokesman. September 11 and the IRA's Colombian connection have already had repercussions in the American-led "peace process" in Northern Ireland.

The latest phase of the "peace process" launched in 1998 by President Bill Clinton, Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern, and British Prime Minister Tony Blair was on the brink of collapse when, in October, the IRA announced that it had put some weapons "beyond use." In my view, this announcement was an effort by the IRA to prevent the severing of its vital fundraising links with sympathetic Irish-Americans following the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States. It does not represent an enduring breakthrough: it is simply a tactical ploy, and the IRA will retain the bulk of its weapons well into the future.

Difficult even for Irish readers to follow in detail, the peace process must have run a course quite mystifying to most Americans. Headlines trumpeting hope have alternated with their opposites throughout much of 2001. Americans need, however, to face the consequences of their good will. Through the fog of events one of these consequences is now clear: Sinn Féin and the IRA have been the main beneficiaries of the "Good Friday Agreement," sealed in April of 1998 by the American mediator, former senator George Mitchell, of Maine.

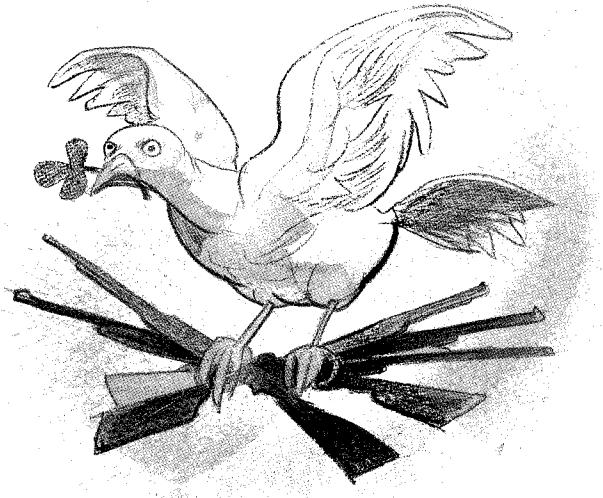
It must be stressed that for all practical purposes, the political party Sinn Féin and the 500 or so paramilitary Provisional IRA men (Provos) "in the field" are one and the same organization. Hitherto their combined strategy of good cop—bad cop has worked to perfection, keeping David Trimble's pro-agreement Unionists off balance; extorting concession after concession from the British government with the ever potent threat of resumed violence in mainland Britain; and, to crown it all, winning applause from a confused "world opinion."

The agreement's major bonus for them was the release of all IRA prisoners then serving sentences for murder, arson, and related offenses. The prisoners were released while the IRA still had all its weapons and was using them for systematic intimidation, including barbaric maimings euphemistically known as "punishment beatings." Political innocents who supported the prisoners' release were led to believe that it would soon be followed by the handing in of arms. This was not the case. Why should it have been? The IRA knew that the fear inspired by its continued possession of those arms was the main source of the concessions made to Sinn Féin-IRA.

It is true that the British released convicted Protestant terrorists along with the IRA convicts. The IRA leadership had not objected to that condition,

because it was necessary to the freedom of the IRA prisoners. The relationship between the IRA and Protestant paramilitaries is an asymmetrical one: the former is a tightly disciplined, highly efficient fighting force with widespread support in the Catholic community; the latter have long been no more than a rabble, without real political objectives and—although guilty of the sporadic and indiscriminate murder of Catholics—mainly occupied with extortion and racketeering, especially around the drug trade. They have almost no support in the Protestant community—nothing remotely like the political clout exercised by the Provos in the Catholic community, especially in West Belfast.

The IRA knew when it agreed to the release of the Protestant paramilitaries that some of them would go on



a rampage. But again, the IRA had no objection: the activities of those paramilitaries allow the Provos to appear in their chosen role as "defenders of the [Catholic] people."

The IRA does not, of course, intend that the present truce with the Protestant paramilitaries should long endure. The IRA's goal is to replace conventional policing; once it has succeeded, it will move against the Protestant paramilitaries, taking on one set at a time. And the disciplined Provos will not be long in forcing their will on the undisciplined and demoralized Protestant hordes.

Then the IRA will have achieved its immediate objective: total control over the streets of Northern Ireland. And nothing will have helped it more

in attaining that objective than the so-called peace process.

Policing is at the center of the whole debate over the peace process. Both the British and the IRA know that cross-community consent, hitherto central to the process, is now a lost cause, and that if the British are not careful, the vacuum may be filled by the resumption of IRA military operations. So why not buy off the IRA by sacrificing the Royal Ulster Constabulary? Or, rather, complete the sacrifice, because it is already in progress. More than 970 members of the RUC, including three assistant chief constables, twenty-five chief superintendents, thirty-seven chief inspectors, and a hundred inspectors, have left the force during the first half of this year.

Ken Maginnis, a former Ulster Unionist spokesman on security, has commented on the impact of the supposed reforms: "The problems come not just in the levels of policing but in the experience. There are not many experienced officers left, the type of policeman that is needed to tackle organized crime."

Sinn Fein and the IRA know that more progress of this kind is under way. The British and Irish governments have announced a package of policing "reforms" in Northern Ireland, in the general direction of the "citizen policing" demanded by Sinn Fein. These proposals envisage indemnity against conviction for about sixty members of paramilitaries who are now on the run; making paramilitary organizations eligible to join local district-policing partnerships; and a program of "demilitarization." In other words, the British military presence in Northern Ireland will be phased out.

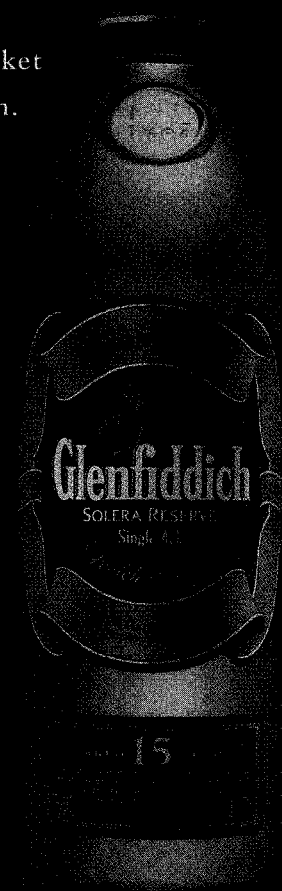
All that is quite satisfactory from the point of view of the Provos, but it does not go far enough for them. Full-fledged "citizen policing"—the control of Northern Ireland by paramilitary groups—is the IRA's ultimate aim. This to be accompanied by the withdrawal of the British military, followed by a full-scale political "Brits out."

The Provos are realistic enough to know that they can't expect to get all that right away. Nor is the IRA likely

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to resume "military operations" right away. It will, I believe, wait for the demoralizing effects of the "reforms" to work on what is left of the RUC. These effects will be felt in terms of the resignation or early retirement of zealous and efficient officers, while those remaining will likely opt for a quiet life by turning a blind eye to paramilitary activities, especially any of the IRA.

The IRA's resumption of military operations has in the past often been rewarded with renewed and enhanced appeasement by the British. But last time it met with stiff, successful resistance from an intact RUC. This time it would be dealing with a thoroughly demoralized force, betrayed by the British government.

It may well be that the IRA would benefit substantially from a renewed offensive, mounted with retained weapons, followed by a renewed ceasefire. If so, Northern Ireland will soon likely be a province governed by the Provisional IRA. But a renewed IRA offensive in London, after sustained British appeasement, might produce a reaction in Britain comparable to the reaction following the appeasement of Nazi Germany in 1938.

If such a reaction did set in, what form might it take?

Neither the RUC—its morale broken by the IRA—nor the courts, undermined by the IRA's ruthless and efficient terrorization of witnesses, could take any action against the IRA. Stopping the rot that has gone so far in Northern Ireland would require quasi-revolutionary measures. Martial law would have to be introduced. The jurisdiction of the ordinary courts, which now protect the terrorists, would have to be suspended. Internment without trial would have to be introduced and applied evenhandedly to suspected terrorists of all persuasions.

If these measures were supported by the mainland British public, they could work, as they did in the repression of suspected Nazi sympathizers during World War II. In characteristically tongue-in-cheek fashion Winston Churchill replied to those in Britain who appealed to international law

and the concept of habeas corpus, "His Majesty's Government has suspended international law for the duration by Order in Council."

Such tough measures, resolutely applied over the necessary period of time, could have an effect. Above all, they could be used to either head off or speedily check resumed IRA attacks on mainland Britain. Appeasement can buy off such attacks only for a time. Efficient and sustained repression could stop them for good. And in that way the measures would fully justify themselves in the eyes of the British public.

All this is within the bounds of possibility, but it will never come into operation unless the IRA again has recourse to military operations. The breakthrough

in October is not real, because the IRA has not permanently renounced violence. Policy planners should be preparing for military operations. There is every reason to suppose that countermeasures of the sort indicated above would succeed. In recent times the IRA actually has had no more than about 500 armed men at its disposal. Its strength has been in its political support, especially in America. That support is not now what it once was. President George Bush was already disposed to welcome, rather than discourage (as his predecessor tended to do), effective action by the British government against the terrorist conspiracy. The devastating terrorist attacks against the United States have surely steeled his resolve.

MOSCOW

PUTIN'S POLICY OF REALPOLITIK

In pledging support to the West's fight against terrorism, the Russian leader is advancing the national interest of his country—and hedging his bets

BY JEFFREY TAYLER

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With characteristically cold eyes and dour demeanor, President Vladimir Putin appeared on Russian television a few hours after the terrorist attacks of September 11 to offer his sympathy and support to the American people. Russians, he said, knew of terrorism "*ne po naslyshke*" ("not by hearsay"), a reference to the wave of apartment-building bombings in Moscow and Volgadonsk in 1999 and to the Kremlin's long war against Chechen separatists. (The bombings remain unsolved, although Osama bin Laden's name has surfaced in the investigation; Putin calls the war in Chechnya "an anti-terrorist operation" against forces aided by foreign Muslim "mercenaries.") The attacks in the United States, Putin asserted, underscored the need for what he had been proposing since coming to power—a worldwide struggle against "international terrorism." His dry delivery notwithstanding, Putin's address marked Russia's at least temporary return to the role of great power, and the horrific images of the tragedies, broadcast on Russian televi-

sion by live CNN feeds, prompted an unprecedented outpouring of sympathy among Russians toward Americans. By all appearances the United States had acquired the full support of both the Kremlin and the Russian people.

But as the shock of September 11 began to wear off, many Russians started manifesting other reactions. "America deserved it," people told me, for supporting Israel in its attempt to crush the second Palestinian uprising and for bombing Yugoslavia to stop Belgrade from persecuting Kosovar Albanians—matters unrelated to each other except that both highlight Russia's loss of superpower status. (The Soviet Union was a key benefactor of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and Russia had claimed the Balkans as part of its sphere of influence for centuries.) Moreover, Putin's pledges of help to the United States have sparked fears that Russia might get dragged into the conflict and become a target of further terrorist assault—not unreasonable concerns, given that 20 million of Russia's 145 million citizens are Muslims (living

mostly in the oil-producing regions of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan), and that Afghanistan borders several of the republics of formerly Soviet Central Asia.

Considering these reservations about helping the United States, it might appear that Putin's plans run counter to Russian interests. They do not. It is important to remember that his calculations are ultimately based on his people's desire for a return to superpower status and on the unsentimental dictates of *realpolitik*. An alliance with the West against terrorism does not conflict



with Russian national interest, because no matter how events play out, Russia cannot lose. If the United States smashes bin Laden's network, it will have done Moscow a favor by eliminating a presumed (and likely) sponsor of the Chechen struggle for independence. If the United States fails, and especially if it fails in Afghanistan, it will have crashed on the rocks of the same mountainous country that dealt the Red Army a defeat so demoralizing that it contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union. In defeat the United States would prove vulnerable, and its superpower status would suffer—a net gain for Russia, according to the zero-sum Cold War logic pervading much of the Kremlin's

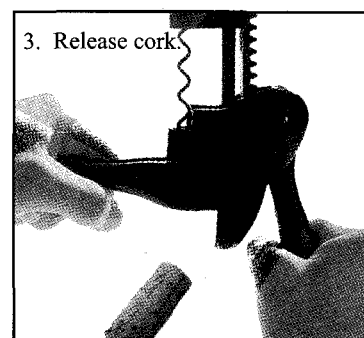
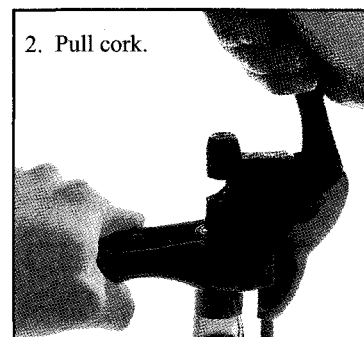
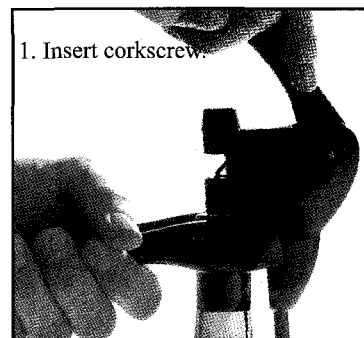
foreign policy. Putin may also have an economic motive for siding with the West against bin Laden: conflict in the Middle East is sure to raise oil prices, at least in the short term, and thereby boost the Russian economy. Russia is the second largest producer of crude petroleum in the world (behind Saudi Arabia), and a third of its revenue comes from taxes on the sale of oil.

As a former KGB agent and a one-time head of the Federal Security Service, the successor to the KGB, Putin has no doubt interpreted the terrorist attacks as a humiliating failure of intelligence on the part of the FBI and the CIA. Many Russians I spoke with have reached that conclusion, and with some surprise: the Russians generally ascribed to the FBI and the CIA powers and efficacy commensurate with those of the security services that have long dominated life in their country. Rather than admit that they were wrong, some Russians have turned to conspiracy theory, positing that American spy agencies either arranged the attacks or knew about them and did nothing to stop them, in order to precipitate an increase in defense spending and return the military to its Cold War grandeur. Two educated Russian acquaintances of mine suggested that the CIA colluded with a foreign power: only a government, they reasoned, would have the resources to train terrorists to plot and carry out such attacks. Which country could this have been? They settled on Turkey, the only Muslim member of NATO and a perennial enemy of Russia's. Still other Russians told me that the U.S. government abetted the attacks to afford itself a pretext for destroying regimes friendly to Moscow in Baghdad, Damascus, Tehran, and elsewhere.

All this may smack of paranoia and nonsense, but those who propounded it are not reactionaries or extremists, and they are not overtly anti-American. Their postulations certainly underscore the complexity of the Russian people's response to the American crisis. Putin's official response, no less complex once one looks beneath the surface, adroitly positions his country to benefit from the West's campaign against terrorism, no matter how the campaign fares. ■

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THE AGENDA

WASHINGTON DESK

COUNCILS OF WAR

Matching confusing new realities to historical experience

BY JAMES FALLOWS

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Everything about Washington in mid-September underscored the fact that this was life in unknown territory. The eeriest reminder was the silence. I don't mean silence in some metaphorical sense—the lack of reassuring comments from President Bush in his uncertain first few days after the attacks, the absence of partisan riposte from Democrats in Congress, even the sudden scarcity of inside dope from the White House or the Pentagon, as the real decisions moved to a very small group of people keeping very close counsel. I mean the absence of *sound*, while National Airport remained closed for three full weeks.

When air travel was suspended nationwide for two days after the attacks, people in many areas noticed the strange emptiness of the skies. But until the weeks passed without traffic at National, it was hard to appreciate that the rumble of a low-altitude approach along the Potomac, every minute or so from seven in the morning until ten at night, is the characteristic sound of the capital. The first time I saw Washington, as part of a crowd around the Pentagon during an anti-war rally in 1967, I was surprised that even speakers with bullhorns had to stop talking when Eastern or Pan Am jets roared overhead. But through September my ears rang with the quiet—except when military helicopters flew past or fighter jets screeched through on patrol, often just before dawn.

When the second jet hit the World Trade Center and it became obvious that this was an attack, some 5,000 civilian

airplanes were aloft. Within twenty minutes the Secretary of Transportation, Norman Mineta, and the head of the Federal Aviation Administration, Jane Garvey, had ordered all of them to land, so that the military could isolate any rogue planes still in the air. This quick decision and its subsequent quick implementation by the air-traffic-control system—which brought 700 planes down within four minutes and nearly 3,000 within an hour—are in retrospect impressive, and almost certainly saved lives. However careful



with details federal officials were in the weeks after the attacks, they made clear their belief that several other potential hijackings had been thwarted by the rapid grounding.

The aviation authorities were operating with no historical precedent: no total grounding had previously been ordered or seriously contemplated. But they instantly came up with the right answer. Across the government many other agencies adjusted to a situation they would not have thought believable a few days before. After varying degrees of delay most of them coped. Their surprisingly effective modus operandi was to find a historical model that more or less fit current circumstances and then to figure out the appropriate lessons to draw from it.

The adjustment was notably quick at the Pentagon. Professional soldiers spend more of their time thinking about the past, after all, than any other group except historians. Even a great power is usually between wars rather

than in one. People in the prime of their careers—the rising colonels or Navy captains spending a year or two at war college—divide their efforts between studying past battles and working through scenarios for future ones.

The day after the attacks members of various high-level military-strategy teams went back to work at the Pentagon, to prepare options in advance of being asked for them by the White House.

"The atmosphere here that day after was very deliberative," a member of one of the teams told me. "The phones weren't ringing. You couldn't get e-mail. Literally, the doors closed, and guys that are very smart sat down and said, 'How have things changed, and what are we going to do?' There was little talk about revenge or picking targets or just carpet bombing and waiting to see what happened. It was obviously going to be a very complicated struggle against a very shrewd and disciplined foe."

There are two contradictory clichés about old soldiers: that as they age, they become more cavalier about sending young men off to battle (the Curtis LeMay model); and that the older they get, the more cautious they become about exposing others to the real face of war (the George C. Marshall-Colin Powell model). In my observation, the second model is more common among U.S. military professionals, and its spirit seemed to prevail at the Pentagon. From the start the discussions emphasized that U.S. strategy must counter the impression that this was a war against Islam. The odd first bombing runs of October 7, in which U.S. planes dropped both laser-guided munitions and MREs ("meals ready to eat"), illustrated the planners' emphasis on a simultaneously military and humanitarian offensive. "We had the conviction that time was

on our side,” the team member said. “It was important not to rush. The passing days increased our options and decreased the other side’s.”

The military planners had plenty of historical analogies to look to. The record of the Gulf War against Iraq, a decade ago, argued for the importance of being patient while building a big coalition and amassing troops on the scene. The Clinton Administration’s hasty retreat from Somalia in early 1994 suggested how upset political leaders and the public could become when American soldiers died. The NATO bombing campaign against Serbia in the late 1990s was the latest reminder that bombardment is a slow and imprecise means of achieving political objectives: the regimes you are trying to influence or overthrow can usually dig in and endure.

The planners looked further back, too—to Pearl Harbor, but in a subtler way than the rest of the country. Everyone in America was talking about Pearl Harbor just after the attacks. The obvious similarity was the total surprise of the assault, which if anything was even greater this time. The obvious difference was that we didn’t know who had attacked. The immediate embrace of the Pearl Harbor image—in speeches and editorial cartoons, on news shows—revealed something not just about the event but also about the current American psyche.

I discussed this with Ernest May, a historian at Harvard who has studied the ways people use and misuse historical analogies. In the 1970s May wrote a cautionary book, *Lessons of the Past*, about the mistakes U.S. statesmen make when learning imprecisely from history. For instance, Lyndon Johnson had learned from World War II that appeasement didn’t work; he was thus deeply reluctant to compromise with the North Vietnamese, and his determination to avoid another Munich led to the disaster in Vietnam. In the late 1970s Americans were still disagreeing bitterly about the causes of the debacle in Vietnam. But the lesson most had learned from Johnson—that the United States could not sustain a ground war against a guerrilla foe in Asia—made

it inconceivable for his successors to commit U.S. troops in Asia when they were actually needed, to resist the murderous Khmer Rouge.

Ernest May eventually wrote, with Richard Neustadt, a prescriptive book called *Thinking in Time*, about ways in which people can learn from history more successfully. The essential point was that no episode in history is identical to any other, although they may share certain patterns or be linked by one’s leading to another. It is important in every case to draw up a list of the resemblances to events in the past—and also a list of the differences. Ho Chi Minh resembled Hitler in being a tyrant; he differed in not seeking world domination.

This reasoning led May to wonder about the implications of the Pearl Harbor metaphor for the recent terrorist attacks. “I was interested in the extent to which the Pearl Harbor analogy popped into everyone’s mind right away,” he told me. “I’m not really sure it’s just because of the similar element of surprise. It may also reflect the idea that this, too, would be an experience that united us. I think people were reaching for that. And in a way the most potent part of the analogy was the one behind that—the immediate definition of the event as *war*. That empowers a President to do things he might not do otherwise. But it is also confining, because it conjures up the image of ‘victory’—an image [Secretary of Defense] Donald Rumsfeld, in particular, cautioned against.”

For some at the Pentagon, Pearl Harbor represented the need to distinguish between the immediate provocation and the real enemy. “The Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, but the weight of the resulting war effort was in Europe,” one member of the planning team told me. “The national strategy was to maintain a free and democratic world, and Nazi Germany was the greater threat.” Hitler obliged the strategists by inexplicably declaring war on the United States four days after Pearl Harbor. This time no war was declared. Not Iraq, Syria, Sudan, or the Taliban government of Afghanistan repeated Hitler’s error; the Taliban authorized “holy war” on the United States only after the U.S. bombings.

The Pentagon planners began their version of what would become the central Washington war-planning debate of the first month: whether a “war on terrorism” could sensibly be confined to the al Qaeda network and its sponsors among the Taliban or whether the real enemy to be defeated was Saddam Hussein’s regime in Iraq. Four days after the attack military teams at the Pentagon presented their initial ideas to Donald Rumsfeld. The small group within the Administration which would make the final decisions gathered at Camp David.

It was soon after these meetings that the White House staff overcame its initial paralysis and began functioning effectively. On Monday, September 17, six days after the attacks and the morning after the Camp David sessions, the White House counselor Karen Hughes told Michael Gerson, of the speechwriting staff, that he had until seven that evening to produce the draft of a major address explaining the war policy. This would be an exhausting exercise, but for a speechwriter it was not a discouraging prospect. Many of the best political speeches are produced on tight deadlines, which is one reason candidates often sound more interesting on the stump, when they’re improvising, than in office, when they have a bigger staff and more time. Anyone with experience writing speeches—as I did for Jimmy Carter, during the campaign and in the White House, a quarter century ago—knows that composition is the easy part. Writing designed to be heard comes more quickly than writing designed to be seen on a page, because the way you say the words in your head is close to the way the speech should come out. Also, you can worry less about logical flow or possible repetition, because you can assume that the listener will hold only about twenty or thirty seconds of the speech in mind at a time, rather than looking around on the page for consistency.

So if the writer has, say, a couple of hours, he or she has a chance of batting out an interesting draft that advances one or two main themes. A full day might be better—but not a full week,

because that leaves time for the hard part: fending off the countless advisers who want to “tune” and “improve” the speech.

The political universe regards a President the way jungle plants regard the sun: everyone competes with everyone else for time, attention, support. The minutes on a President’s daily schedule are the main objects of this competition, which makes the President’s scheduler both influential and harried. The words coming out of a President’s mouth are fought over almost as fiercely, and the more time available to work on a presidential speech, the more complex and bogged down it becomes. The extreme example is a State of the Union address: everyone in the government has a year to see it coming and to try to work in his or her favorite causes. The most enjoyable speech I was involved in with Jimmy Carter was a Law Day address he decided at the last minute to give. Carter wanted to talk about legal reforms, and he forbade any lawyers on the staff to work on the speech. That gave me a clear shot. The least enjoyable was a major foreign-policy address that was months in the making. Different factions of the government fought over each paragraph, and the result read like a Dickensian contract.

With the blessing of a tight deadline, Gerson and his associates streamlined the composition process by organizing the speech as answers to a series of questions. “Americans are asking, ‘Who attacked our country?’ ... Americans are asking, ‘Why do they hate us?’ ... Americans are asking, ‘How will we fight and win this war?’”

“Americans lacked some very basic information about the nature of the forces against us,” Gerson told me. “We decided in the speechwriting process to present the questions as questions. It helped organize the speech quickly, and it gave us a lot of momentum, so we could go through and answer them one by one. Unlike an inaugural, we didn’t really have time to go read Woodrow Wilson on war aims, or Harry Truman on containment.”

The draft appeared on Monday night; Bush worked on the speech Tues-

day and Wednesday, for his big appearance on Thursday night. He apparently felt that this was his opportunity to rise to a great moment, as Rudy Giuliani had done with an accumulation of impromptu comments. The most memorable line was a late addition to the draft: “Whether we bring our enemies to justice or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done.” The most effective passage was one Bush worked on particularly hard. It was the ending, when he switched from the “we” of most of the speech (“We will not tire ...”) to the “I” of personal commitment, and expressed confidence in the outcome: “I will not forget the wound to our country and those who inflicted it. I will not yield. I will not rest. I will not relent in waging this struggle for freedom and security for the American people. The course of this conflict is not known, yet its outcome is certain. Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war. And we know that God is not neutral between them.”

“He worked on the conclusion for days,” Gerson told me. “It very much embodied a vow on his part. He wanted to finish with a statement of moral confidence in ... in the makeup of the universe. Which is appropriate. He did not feel the outcome was up in the air. He wanted to do so not in a sectarian way but with a broad confidence in Providence, which is the way that American Presidents have often talked.”

Read on the page, the speech may seem unexceptional—the units of thought are too short and choppy, the “Americans are asking” structure is too obvious. But it was meant to be seen and heard, which is something different, and as a performance it was tremendous.

The speech did wonders, of course, for Bush’s personal standing and plausibility. It also did something less obvious but quite important: it resolved, or at least deferred, a fundamental disagreement within his Administration about war aims. The disagreement will reappear, but it did not hamper the decisions of the first month.

This disagreement, widely discussed in the press, could be described

as “maximalist” versus “minimalist,” or “big enemy” versus “big coalition.” The maximalist, big-enemy view, most clearly expressed by the deputy secretary of defense, Paul Wolfowitz, is that a serious war on terrorism means attacking and overthrowing the regimes that harbor terrorists.

Although Wolfowitz had a major policy job during the first Bush Administration, as an undersecretary of defense, intellectually and spiritually he is a figure from the days of Ronald Reagan. (Under Reagan he was a State Department official and then the ambassador to Indonesia.) His tone is that of the *Wall Street Journal*’s editorial page, or the old *Commentary* magazine. He loves highlighting rather than papering over differences, and pushing arguments to their logical extreme. (I should say that I know and like Wolfowitz.) His current boss, Donald Rumsfeld, has a variant of the same approach. Rumsfeld, a former fighter pilot and CEO, makes the corporate big man’s assumption that he’ll get his way in an argument; Wolfowitz, a former professor and defense intellectual, makes the scholar’s assumption that he’ll win on debating points.

In the early Reagan years Wolfowitz honed his technique by arguing over the big issues of the day—nuclear weapons and arms-control strategies. Nice, normal attempts to limit the arms race, through treaties, made the world *more* dangerous, he said; they actually gave each side an incentive to build threatening first-strike weapons. The safest thing the United States could do for itself and the world was simply to forget about arms-control talks and build a self-defense system. This was Reagan’s Strategic Defense Initiative, better known (and by some still loved) as Star Wars.

His current maximalist case about terrorism rests on the contention that without friendly governments to harbor them, groups like al Qaeda will no longer be major threats. Sophisticated terrorist networks can’t just live like bandits in the hills. They need a haven in which to use stores and banks, buy weapons, get some rest, and feel safe from capture. Changing the regimes in

sponsoring countries—principally Iraq but also Sudan, Libya, and, of course, Afghanistan—is necessary, because otherwise new terrorist networks will spring up to replace those that are eliminated. A nation as big and open as the United States can never adequately protect itself by “playing defense” against terrorist attacks—guarding every bridge and building, keeping watch on every suspicious character. So it must play an effective game of offense: that is, as Wolfowitz memorably put it at a press conference just after the attacks, it must “end states that sponsor terrorism.” From the maximalist perspective, the sign of a serious military campaign would be dropping bombs on Baghdad at the same time they fell on Kabul. And we’d know the war was won when Saddam Hussein was overthrown.

The minimalist, big-coalition view—most often associated with Colin Powell—is that the United States can’t afford any such sweeping crusade. Powell is, of course, far more familiar to the public than Wolfowitz, but two of his formative experiences, from which he clearly draws his own lessons, deserve emphasis. One is his service as a combat commander in Vietnam. This left him, like many other career soldiers of his generation, with the embittered conviction that the Army must never again be sent to fight a war without the support of the whole political system. His instinctive reaction to maximalist arguments would be *How will the battle actually play out in Iraq? And what will the politicians say when our troops get poison-gassed?*

Powell’s other and less well known experience is as a skillful aide, insider, and bureaucrat. He was a White House fellow after his tour in Vietnam and first attracted Rumsfeld’s notice then. (Rumsfeld was the director of the Economic Stabilization Program, and Richard Nixon’s right-hand man.) He was a successful Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under the very different Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton. He is known for his skills in negotiation and coalition building. Vice President Dick Cheney shares

some of these traits, and during the Gulf War, Cheney, as Defense Secretary, and Powell together did a slow, patient job of building a huge coalition for the purpose of driving Iraqi troops out of Kuwait.

At least in the first weeks after September 11 Powell seemed to look to the Gulf War model. Strong as it is, the United States needs cooperation from the Gulf nations to solve the immediate problem of Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan. It needs intelligence from Pakistan, it needs overflight rights from Muslim countries, it needs the world’s mullahs to refrain from calling for a *jihad*. Therefore it does what it did in the Gulf War. It chooses an objective so contained and specific that no reasonable country can object:



catching the murderers of more than 5,000 people. And unless the United States wants to gird, Israel-like, for perpetual conflict, it does no more.

The tension between these views will, I think, affect our foreign policy for years to come, no matter which party is in the White House, much the way the specter of another Vietnam has affected military commitments by both parties in recent decades. Bush avoided exposing a split within his Administration with the artistry of his speech. His claims were strongly maximalist: “From this day forward any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime.” Hostile regimes are those we may attack. But the actions following the speech were aimed specifically at al Qaeda and the Taliban, and were consistent with keeping the coalition as large and as stable as possible. The minimalist team, concentrated in Powell’s State Department, was satisfied, because it was guiding day-by-day policy. And the maximalist team, whose most vocal members, apart from Wolfowitz, are conservatives outside the Administration, could tell itself that the logic of Bush’s commitment would eventually lead in its direction. “All the ideas in the President’s speech were maximalist,” a member of the maximalist camp who is outside the government told me. “So I consider the first steps as that—first steps.”

Much of the continuing interest in the way the war is prosecuted will lie in examining the varying historical experiences that are brought to bear on a novel event. Except for the President, nearly every leading member of the war-planning team played an important part in the Gulf War. The lessons of that war inevitably shape the approach to this engagement, although interpretations of them vary. Caution and patience pay off, by building a broad coalition; or caution backfires, leaving Saddam Hussein in control. Since George W. Bush was more closely involved with his father’s politicking than with his foreign policy, the most vivid lesson of the Gulf War for him must be the transience of wartime popularity. His father seemed such a colossus in 1991 that Dick Gephardt and all the other “strong” Democratic candidates were afraid to run against him. Then the economy slowed down, and a year later he watched his father lose to Bill Clinton.

Ernest May’s latest book, *Strange Victory*, is about the Nazis’ lightning conquest of France in 1940. May told me he thinks of that, too, as a useful analogy: “The Germans thought very hard about what were the procedural vulnerabilities on the other side. How the *way* they did things made them vulnerable. Obviously, that’s been done to us in this case.”

May started running through other precedents and parallels—for instance, the way Tom Ridge’s new Office of Homeland Security resembles efforts by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to straighten out bureaucratic snarls during World War II. But then he cautioned against spending too much time in this pursuit. “One of the functions of historical analogy is to try to give you a sense of the contours of a situation that is otherwise unfamiliar,” he told me. “Because this situation is so unfamiliar, you’ve seen more of the analogies and ‘lessons’ than you usually get. But that will recede as it becomes more familiar.”

Carl M. Cannon, Sydney J. Freedberg Jr., James Kitfield, Mark Murray, Alexis Simendinger, and Peter H. Stone, of the National Journal staff, contributed to the reporting of this article.

SECURITY VERSUS CIVIL LIBERTIES

A distinguished jurist advises us to calm down about the probable curtailing of some personal freedoms in the months ahead. As a nation we've treated certain civil liberties as malleable, when necessary, from the start

BY RICHARD A. POSNER

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In the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks have come many proposals for tightening security; some measures to that end have already been taken. Civil libertarians are troubled. They fear that concerns about national security will lead to an erosion of civil liberties. They offer historical examples of supposed overreactions to threats to national security. They treat our existing civil liberties—freedom of the press, protections of privacy and of the rights of criminal suspects, and the rest—as sacrosanct, insisting that the battle against international terrorism accommodate itself to them.

I consider this a profoundly mistaken approach to the question of balancing liberty and security. The basic mistake is the prioritizing of liberty. It is a mistake about law and a mistake about history. Let me begin with law. What we take to be our civil liberties—for example, immunity from arrest except upon probable cause to believe we've committed a crime, and from prosecution for violating a criminal statute enacted after we committed the act that violates it—were made legal rights by the Constitution and other enactments. The other enactments can be changed relatively easily, by amendatory legislation. Amending the Constitution is much more difficult. In recognition of this the Framers left most of the constitutional provisions that confer rights pretty vague. The courts have made them definite.

Concretely, the scope of these rights has been determined, through an interaction of constitutional text and subsequent judicial interpretation, by a weighing of competing interests. I'll call them the public-safety interest and the liberty interest. Neither, in my view, has priority. They are both important, and their relative importance changes from time to time and from situation to situation.

The safer the nation feels, the more weight judges will be willing to give to the liberty interest. The greater the threat that an activity poses to the nation's safety, the stronger will the grounds seem for seeking to repress that activity, even at some cost to liberty. This fluid approach is only common sense.



Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson gave it vivid expression many years ago when he said, in dissenting from a free-speech decision he thought doctrinaire, that the Bill of Rights should not be made into a suicide pact. It was not intended to be such, and the present contours of the rights that it confers, having been shaped far more by judicial interpretation than by the literal text (which doesn't define such critical terms as "due process of law" and "unreasonable" arrests and searches), are alterable in response to changing threats to national security.

If it is true, therefore, as it appears to be at this writing, that the events of September 11 have revealed the United States to be in much greater jeopardy from international terrorism than had previously been believed—have revealed it to be threatened by a diffuse, shadowy enemy that must be fought with police measures as well as military force—it stands to reason that our civil liberties will be curtailed. They *should* be curtailed, to the extent that the benefits in greater security outweigh the costs in reduced liberty. All that can reasonably be asked of the responsible legislative and judicial officials is that they weigh the costs as carefully as the benefits.

It will be argued that the lesson of history is that officials habitually exaggerate dangers to the nation's security. But the lesson of history is the opposite. It is because officials have repeatedly and disastrously underestimated these dangers that our history is as violent as it

is. Consider such underestimated dangers as that of secession, which led to the Civil War; of a Japanese attack on the United States, which led to the disaster at Pearl Harbor; of Soviet espionage in the 1940s, which accelerated the Soviet Union's acquisition of nuclear weapons and emboldened Stalin to encourage North Korea's invasion of South Korea; of the installation of Soviet missiles in Cuba, which precipitated the Cuban missile crisis; of political assassinations and outbreaks of urban violence in the 1960s; of the Tet Offensive of 1968; of the Iranian revolution of 1979 and the subsequent taking of American diplomats as hostages; and, for that matter, of the events of September 11.

It is true that when we are surprised and hurt, we tend to overreact—but only with the benefit of hindsight can a reaction be separated into its proper and excess layers. In hindsight we know that internment of Japanese-Americans did not shorten World War II. But was this known at the time? If not, shouldn't the Army have erred on the side of caution, as it did? Even today we cannot say with any assurance that Abraham Lincoln was wrong to suspend habeas corpus during the Civil War, as he did on several occasions, even though the Constitution is clear that only Congress can suspend this right. (Another of Lincoln's wartime measures, the Emancipation Proclamation, may also have been unconstitutional.) But Lincoln would have been wrong to cancel the 1864 presidential election, as some urged: by November of 1864 the North was close to victory, and canceling the election would have created a more dangerous precedent than the wartime suspension of habeas corpus. This last example shows that civil liberties remain part of the balance even in the most dangerous of times, and even though their relative weight must then be less.

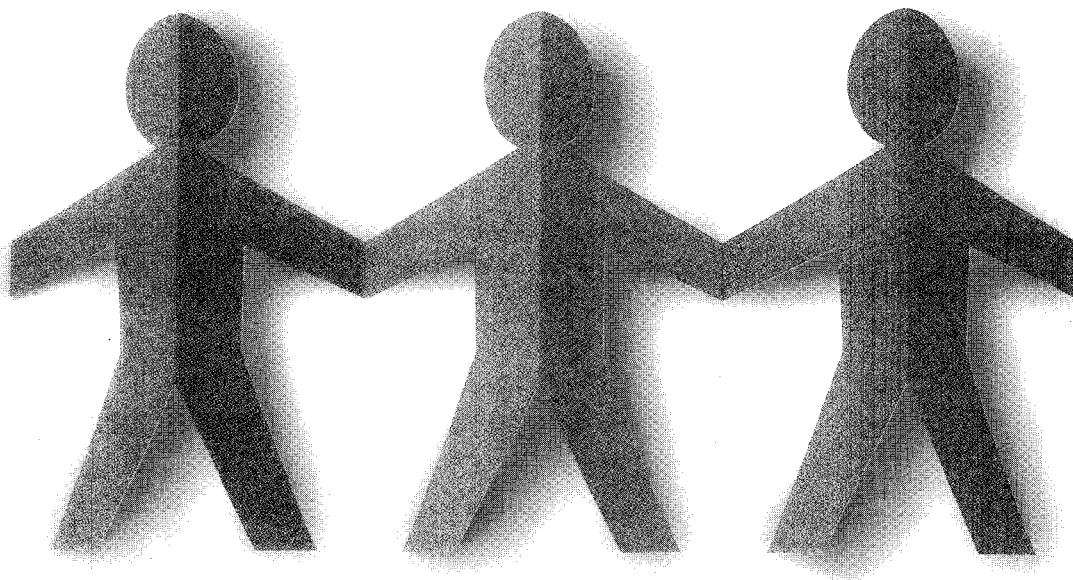
Lincoln's unconstitutional acts during the Civil War show that even legality must sometimes be sacrificed for other values. We are a nation under law, but first we are a nation. I want to emphasize something else, however: the malleability of law, its pragmatic rather than dogmatic character. The law is not absolute, and the slogan "*Fiat iustitia ruat caelum*" ("Let

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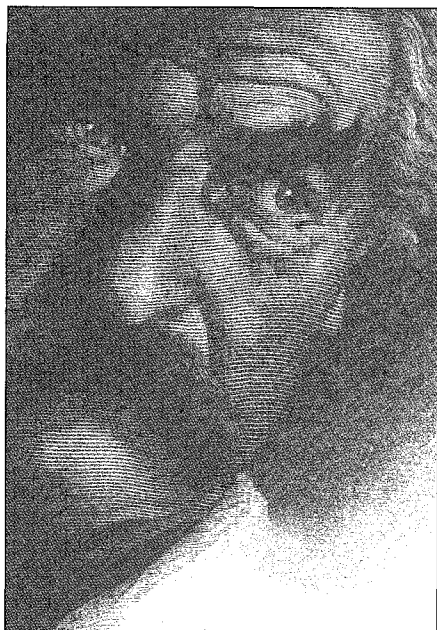
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justice be done though the heavens fall") is dangerous nonsense. The law is a human creation rather than a divine gift, a tool of government rather than a mandarin mystery. It is an instrument for promoting social welfare, and as the conditions essential to that welfare change, so must it change.

Civil libertarians today are missing something else—the opportunity to challenge other public-safety concerns that impair civil liberties. I have particularly in mind the war on drugs. The sale of illegal drugs is a "victimless" crime in the special but important sense that it is a consensual activity. Usually there is no complaining witness, so in order to bring the criminals to justice the police have to rely heavily on paid informants (often highly paid and often highly unsavory), undercover agents, wiretaps and other forms of electronic surveillance, elabo-

rate sting operations, the infiltration of suspect organizations, random searches, the monitoring of airports and highways, the "profiling" of likely suspects on the basis of ethnic or racial identity or national origin, compulsory drug tests, and other intrusive methods that put pressure on civil liberties. The war on drugs has been a big flop; moreover, in light of what September 11 has taught us about the gravity of the terrorist threat to the United States, it becomes hard to take entirely seriously the threat to the nation that drug use is said to pose. Perhaps it is time to redirect law-enforcement resources from the investigation and apprehension of drug dealers to the investigation and apprehension of international terrorists. By doing so we may be able to minimize the net decrease in our civil liberties that the events of September 11 have made inevitable.

MILITARY AFFAIRS

FOURTH-GENERATION WARFARE

Pentagon mavericks have been trying for decades to reorient military strategy toward a new kind of threat—the kind we're suddenly facing in the war on terrorism. Now that we've got the war they predicted, will we get the reforms they've been pushing for?

BY JASON VEST

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For all the tactical twists and turns in U.S. military planning during and since the Cold War, the basic strategic template has remained more or less the same. To simplify mightily, the emphasis has been on a doctrine of attrition and theater warfare against large, identifiable foes with professional standing armies. This strategy has gone hand in hand with an emphasis on costly high-tech weapons systems designed to project force from a distance. Some of these weapons systems are dubious, and the procurement system as a whole is characterized by cronyism, turf battles, and waste. To be sure, not everything about the traditional outlook is bad, and the American military is in important respects without parallel. It is capable of a crushing global reach, which in certain circumstances can destroy opposing forces with limited risk. But the U.S. military also has trouble reacting quickly, and it has tended to think far more about the kinds of battles

we won't be fighting than about the real-world conflicts we're about to be embroiled in.

The terrorist attacks on the United States last September, orchestrated by the Osama bin Laden organization, have now placed the issue of the military's orientation plainly in the public view. In one corner stand advocates for something along the lines of the status quo (whatever they may now say about the need for "flexibility"). In the opposing corner are champions of the late John Boyd, a colonel in the Air Force and an innovative theorist who considered that large, expensive weapons systems that took forever to produce were as much of an enemy as hostile foreign powers. A student of Sun-Tzu and Clausewitz, Boyd advocated reforms—many of which have been successfully adopted by the Marine Corps but have met with resistance elsewhere, particularly in the Army—that stressed a number of inter-

related elements. Chief among them: adaptability and agility as the driving forces of combat; weapons that are dependable, simple, and cheap; and decentralization of command and communications, so that fighting units aren't at the mercy of layers of decision-makers.

The inheritor of Boyd's mantle is a Pentagon weapons analyst named Franklin C. "Chuck" Spinney, who has spent the past two decades arguing that static thinking, poor financial oversight, weapons-procurement bloat, and a personnel system that accentuates careerism over training have undermined America's war-fighting readiness. (For anyone interested in these topics, Spinney's Web site, Defense and the National Interest—www.d-n-i.net—is indispensable.) As Spinney sees it, the September 11 attacks call attention to something that a number of military reformers have been warning about for years: the advent of "fourth-generation warfare," and the fact that the U.S. military isn't ready for it. As Spinney observed on his Web site recently, the attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center have "dispelled forever the notion that 4GW is just 'terrorism' or something that happens only in poverty-stricken Third World countries."

In the Boydian view, first-generation warfare was defined by close-order formations armed with guns to repel sword-and-bayonet cavalry and infantry, something the young Napoleon perfected. Second-generation warfare's winners were those who had the most, or the best-managed, firepower, enabling their forces to win through attrition—an approach mastered by the Prussian army. Third-generation warfare saw second-generation armies being agitated by decentralized attacks that, though brilliant, ultimately failed by virtue of an opponent's ability to wear the attacker down. An example would be the Ludendorff offensives of 1918, when an initially successful German drive against the Allies ultimately stalled.

In their essay "Why It Is Time to Adapt to Changing Conditions," which is included in the recent anthology *Spirit, Blood and Treasure: The American Cost of Battle in the 21st Century*, Spinney, Army Major Donald Vandergriff, and

Marine Lieutenant Colonel John Sayen observe that even though the Cold War is over, American military doctrine is still firmly rooted in second-generation thinking, which better serves a largely politicized high command, Congress, and defense contractors than it does national security. In their view, the Clinton and Bush Administrations and the military establishment have been keeping alive defense projects that might have had some utility in a by-gone era, while paying only lip service to doctrine and weapons for fourth-generation warfare.

Viewed in the context of military history, fourth-generation warfare is highly irregular. "Asymmetric" operations—in which a vast mismatch exists between the resources and philosophies of the combatants, and in which the emphasis is on bypassing an opposing military force and striking directly at cultural, political, or population targets—are a defining characteristic of fourth-generation warfare. The United States will face decentralized, non-state actors (perhaps supported by a rogue nation or two) who understand just how big an impact attacks on markets, communications, and cultural icons can have on the American psyche.

Spinney and his co-authors write, of the sorts of enemies that confront us in fourth-generation warfare,

They usually present few, if any, important targets vulnerable to conventional attack, and their followers are usually much more willing to fight and die for their causes. They seldom wear uniforms and may be difficult to distinguish from the general population. They are also far less hampered by convention and more likely to seek new and innovative means to achieve their objectives.

An enemy who employs 4GW tactics views whatever action he takes as one prong of a sustained campaign in the service of a political objective (and a political objective, despite all the focus on the bin Laden organization's religious zeal, is something bin Laden has). Contrary to advocates of standard U.S. military thinking, American proponents of 4GW see the role of the armed forces when confronted with this kind of situation as cru-

cial but also of limited prominence—the military mission is tied closely to diplomatic, political, and economic initiatives that focus on eroding the enemy's popular support. "Perhaps most odd of all," Spinney has written on his Web site, "being seen as 'too successful' militarily may create a backlash, making the opponent's other elements of 4GW more effective."

As Spinney, Vandergriff, and Sayen observe, ever since the end of the Cold War the Pentagon has lagged in developing the correct military response to 4GW—a response that calls for reliance on smaller units versed in maneuver warfare. This kind of fighting eschews heavy firepower, attrition, and long-range, high-altitude bombardment. It favors joint-service operations and close-quarters combat involving small, fast-moving units with lighter equipment.

Under the leadership of Commandants Alfred Gray and Charles Krulak, the Marine Corps began implementing these ideas even before the Cold War ended. In 1999, when General Eric Shinseki became the Army's chief of staff, he made it clear that he, too, was a maneuver-warfare advocate, and stated that he wanted to be able to deploy a new, streamlined, medium-sized combat brigade anywhere in the world within ninety-six hours. Although many junior and mid-level officers were buoyed by Shinseki's ambitions, they have been disappointed by how little headway he has in fact made. One big obstacle: entrenched senior subordinates who are simply resistant to change. "Other chiefs of staff have tried to do this sort of thing," says one Army officer not enamored of his time at the Pentagon, "and like them, Shinseki has essentially been undermined by colonels who are more bureaucrats than warriors."

Who the soldier bureaucrats are—and how they got where they are and manage to stay there—is of particular interest to Donald Vandergriff, who has made an extensive study of the Army's personnel system and believes that now is the time to undertake a program of genuine reform. At the moment, he points out, the system isn't



set up for optimal results against the kind of enemy the Boydians think is most likely to threaten America—the kind that attacked us on September 11. “This is not a war where you’re going to fight a formation of opposing units,” Vandergriff says. “And if you were really serious about acknowledging and addressing the reality of fourth-generation warfare, you would work hard to get and keep quality people in the military, and keep captains and NCOs and their units together longer so they have more cohesion and can train more effectively. We could also start by cutting the size of the officer corps—do we really need three hundred and eighty-six generals in the Army, each with a staff that generates its own paperwork? The current personnel system is in the industrial age and is at the heart of what’s wrong with the system today.”

And then there’s the accounting system. Even though Defense Department auditors and congressional investigators have found that over the past five years the armed services couldn’t account for tens of billions of dollars, no one has taken steps to change what amounts to standard operating procedure. If any other agency of the government failed, according to its own auditors, to account satisfactorily for such large amounts of money, an overhaul would be swift in coming.

In theory this is something that the 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review—and its 2001 successor, which was delivered to Congress in September—should have addressed. Neither review did so. Spinney had proposed a one-year freeze on all budget programs, followed by a real effort to “get the Pentagon to think before it spends.” This hasn’t really happened. Although hastily rewritten to emphasize a commitment to “homeland defense” over missile defense, the most recent QDR is short on specifics and indefinitely postpones crucial decisions, notably on items such as personnel and procurement. It does keep three major fighter-aircraft projects alive—a victory for 2GW.

The possibility of a revolutionary overhaul of the military has grown remote. “The September 11 attacks,” Spinney says, “which cost the perpetrators all of five-hundred thousand dol-

lars, don’t justify an increase in the defense budget—we’re spending as much on defense already as the next fifteen countries do combined. Look at where the new money is going to go—it purports to help us deal with this problem, but it’s going to fund all the other crap.” Spinney says he won’t be surprised if the money ends up getting used to buy more F-22s for the Air Force, more self-propelled Crusader howitzers for the Army, and more submarines for the Navy.

There is, however, an idea from World War II that is worth revisiting—one that both President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the military leadership saw as eminently patriotic and also crucial to winning the war: Senator Harry S. Truman’s Special Committee to Investigate the National Defense Pro-

gram. The committee’s official mandate was to “investigate all activities” involving national defense; Truman himself described the job as being “to dig this stuff up now and correct it,” and the Truman Committee ended up saving American taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars. Today, with \$40 billion earmarked for a major war against terrorism, many of those interviewed for this article argue that Congress must play a specific oversight role to ensure that the money is spent wisely and properly. This isn’t something that should be left to any of the standing armed-services committees, which are compromised by longtime ties to defense contractors and the military bureaucracy. The job must fall to some new entity in Congress—something as new as the threats we now confront.

PUBLIC HEALTH

COUNTERING THE SMALLPOX THREAT

Even before the September 11 attacks heightened our fears of bio-terrorism, a biologist came up with a sensible strategy for coping with one of the most fearsome possibilities

BY JONATHAN RAUCH

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In the days following the terrorist attacks that brought down the World Trade Center and demolished part of the Pentagon, I received a series of e-mails from my sister asking what I thought she could do to protect herself and her family. Should she stock up on water? On food? What about buying a gas mask? I told her I doubted that any of those things would really help. At first blush the notion of suburban moms buying gas masks seemed a little silly. But a lot of people were buying gas masks at that point, and mostly they were not silly people, and the impulse they were acting on was not silly. What they wanted was to *do* something: to exert at least a little control over a new and frightening situation. That is just the sort of impulse that the fight against terrorism needs to put to use. One way to use it is against the threat of smallpox.

Experts have agreed that smallpox terrorism is potentially the Big One. Maybe not bigger in terms of lives lost than, say, a nuclear warhead detonating over Man-

hattan, but certainly right up there, and probably more socially destabilizing. Unlike chemical agents and some other biological agents, such as anthrax (as we’ve lately seen) and botulism, smallpox spreads virulently from person to person. The disease is fatal 30 percent of the time and leaves its survivors disfigured and sometimes blind. Symptoms take a week or two to appear. In an urbanized country full of planes, trains, and automobiles, smallpox could easily spread to any number of cities and states before health officials realized what was going on.

Routine smallpox vaccination ended in the early 1970s, because a worldwide campaign had succeeded in eradicating the disease. The virus survived only in laboratories in the United States and the Soviet Union. After the Soviet Union collapsed, credible reports surfaced alleging that the Soviets had produced smallpox in large quantities, for biological warfare. Bio-terrorism experts began to worry that the Russians might have let the virus slip into the wrong hands.

Still, most people believed that smallpox's very virulence made it an unlikely weapon of terror. After September 11 a lot of those people changed their minds.

I was vaccinated for smallpox years ago, in childhood; so were many other Americans who are now over thirty. But it's unclear how much good this would do if smallpox were unleashed today. "One of the problems with smallpox vaccine is that immunity doesn't last very long," Peter J. Hotez, a senior fellow at the Sabin Vaccine Institute, in Washington, D.C., told me when I asked if I would be safe. "It can last as few as three to five years." And younger people, of course, weren't vaccinated. America today would be a tinderbox for smallpox: something like 90 percent of the population is thought to be susceptible.

To its credit, the Clinton Administration took the threat seriously. Realizing that existing stocks (about 12 million to 15 million doses of twenty-year-old vaccine) were too thin to cope with a serious crisis, in September of last year the government ordered up a new smallpox vaccine, with the first 40 million doses to be delivered in 2004 and more to come thereafter. This October, as anthrax scares transformed the threat of bio-terrorism into reality, the Bush Administration announced that it would seek to increase the smallpox-vaccine inventory to 300 million doses, possibly by next year.

With the new vaccine will come a new and difficult question: Who should be vaccinated? My first thought was "Everyone." Or at least—as Homeland Security Chief Tom Ridge has suggested—we should resume routine vaccination of children. But this sort of uniform approach has a significant drawback. The smallpox vaccine is not perfectly safe. During the eradication campaign, according to Tara O'Toole, of the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, about one in 300,000 people died from side effects of the vaccine or suffered irreversible brain damage. At that rate, if all 280 million Americans were to be vaccinated, nearly a thousand people would die or be gravely injured.

For that reason the government instead built its plans around a contain-

ment strategy. Vaccine would be stockpiled for use in case of an outbreak. If smallpox were spotted, authorities would declare a health emergency and rush to vaccinate (or quarantine) everyone likely to have crossed the virus's path. (Fortunately, the vaccine is effective even when given a few days after exposure, so in principle post-outbreak vaccination could stop the spread.) There is certainly something to be said for the containment strategy, but it is not without worrisome risks. It relies on health workers, public officials, and the public itself to react quickly, calmly, and efficiently. Virtually everyone who was exposed would need to be promptly vaccinated or quarantined. That would be easier said than done, because the early symptoms of smallpox look like flu. Moreover, once word of a smallpox outbreak hit the street, panic, chaos, flight, and human error would inevitably give the virus chances to spread. Even if a containment plan ran like clockwork, some people—those caught at the onset—would die who might have lived had they previously been vaccinated.

While I was pondering these problems, I came across a news article from October of 2000, in which a biologist named Paul W. Ewald, of Amherst College, suggested something so obvious that no one else seemed to have considered it. He proposed making the smallpox vaccine available to the public, the way many other vaccines are today. Individuals could then decide, after being apprised of the risks and with medical advice, whether or not to get themselves and their children inoculated.

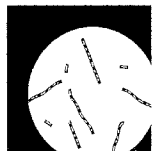
Regular readers of this magazine may recall from an article in the February, 1999, issue—"A New Germ Theory," by Judith Hooper—that Ewald has specialized in thinking about how doctors can use evolutionary pressures to make pathogens more benign, and how terrorists might contrive to make pathogens deadlier. That led him to think about smallpox. I called Ewald recently and asked him to expand on the idea of voluntary vaccination.

"I think the key thing that's been

missed in this analysis," he told me, "is that the more any given vaccine is used, the less bang the terrorist is going to get." Even if only a minority of the public chose vaccination, those people's immunity would not only protect them in the event of an attack but would also slow transmission to others. That could buy precious time. Moreover, if, say, 30 million people were vaccinated, there would be 30 million fewer to vaccinate in a crisis. Indeed, Ewald said, "If you have thirty million people vaccinated, the terrorists might just decide, Let's not bother." The terrorists might, of course, try something else—but pretty much anything would be better than smallpox.

"Another problem," Ewald said, "is that if you wait until the crisis is at hand, you lose a chance to have careful analysis on a patient-by-patient basis of the risks posed by vaccinating. It might just be that you're cranking out vaccinations as fast as possible." There is a deeper point here as well. People are as different in their tolerance for risk as they are in their tolerance for vaccines. To weigh the minuscule but real risk of a smallpox attack against the minuscule but real risk of complications from a vaccine is to weigh imponderables. No public-health expert is any more qualified to make this call than is the person who will have to live with the consequences.

It isn't surprising that it was a biologist who suggested letting individual people and doctors, rather than public-health authorities, decide who would be vaccinated. Biologists tend to see a world of variegated individuals, whereas the public-health establishment tends to view the public as a "population" and to think in terms of centralized, one-size-fits-all measures based on expert knowledge. A national anti-terror campaign will certainly need its share of unitary, top-down strategies on the public-health and national-defense models; but if it is to be sustainable and successful it will need to treat the public first and foremost as a resource to be enlisted, not merely as a population to be instructed. As we know from United Airlines Flight 93, engaging the intelligence and moral judgment of ordinary people can make all the difference. Why not apply that lesson to the greatest terrorist threat of all? ▀



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ONE NATION, SLIGHTLY DIVISIBLE

The electoral map of the 2000 presidential race became famous: big blocks of red (denoting states that went for Bush) stretched across the heartland, with brackets of blue (denoting states for Gore) along the coasts. Our Blue America correspondent has ventured repeatedly into Red territory. He asks the question—after September 11, a pressing one—Do our differences effectively split us into two nations, or are they just cracks in a still-united whole?

BY DAVID BROOKS

Illustrations by Guy Billout

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Sixty-five miles from where I am writing this sentence is a place with no Starbucks, no Pottery Barn, no Borders or Barnes & Noble. No blue *New York Times* delivery bags dot the driveways on Sunday mornings. In this place people don't complain that Woody Allen isn't as funny as he used to be, because they never thought he was funny. In this place you can go to a year's worth of dinner parties without hearing anyone quote an aperçu he first heard on *Charlie Rose*. The people here don't buy those little rear-window stickers when they go to a summer-vacation spot so that they can drive around with "MV" decals the rest of the year; for the most part they don't even go to Martha's Vineyard.

The place I'm talking about goes by different names. Some call it America. Others call it Middle America. It has also come to be known as Red America, in reference to the maps that were produced on the night of the 2000 presidential election. People in Blue America, which is my part of America, tend to live around big cities on the coasts. People in Red America tend to live on farms or in small towns or small cities far away from the coasts. Things are different there.

Everything that people in my neighborhood do without motors, the people in Red America do with motors. We sail; they powerboat. We cross-country ski; they snowmobile. We hike; they drive ATVs. We have vineyard tours; they have tractor pulls. When it comes to yard work, they have rider mowers; we have illegal aliens.

Different sorts of institutions dominate life in these two places. In Red America churches are everywhere. In Blue America Thai restaurants are everywhere. In Red America they have QVC, the Pro Bowlers Tour, and hunting. In Blue America we have NPR, Doris Kearns Goodwin, and socially conscious investing. In Red America the Wal-Marts are massive, with parking lots the size of state parks. In Blue

America the stores are small but the markups are big. You'll rarely see a Christmas store in Blue America, but in Red America, even in July, you'll come upon stores selling fake Christmas trees, wreath-decorated napkins, Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer collectible thimbles and spoons, and little snow-covered villages.

We in the coastal metro Blue areas read more books and attend more plays than the people in the Red heartland. We're more sophisticated and cosmopolitan—just ask us about our alumni trips to China or Provence, or our interest in Buddhism. But don't ask us, please, what life in Red America is like. We don't know. We don't know who Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins are, even though the novels they have co-written have sold about 40 million copies over the past few years. We don't know what James Dobson says on his radio program, which is listened to by millions. We don't know about Reba or Travis. We don't know what happens in mega-churches on Wednesday evenings, and some of us couldn't tell you the difference between a fundamentalist and an evangelical, let alone describe what it means to be a Pentecostal. Very few of us know what goes on in Branson, Missouri, even though it has seven million visitors a year, or could name even five NASCAR drivers, although stock-car races are the best-attended sporting events in the country. We don't know how to shoot or clean a rifle. We can't tell a military officer's rank by looking at his insignia. We don't know what soy beans look like when they're growing in a field.

All we know, or all we think we know, about Red America is that millions and millions of its people live quietly underneath flight patterns, many of them are racist and homophobic, and when you see them at highway rest stops, they're often really fat and their clothes are too tight.

And apparently we don't want to know any more than that. One can barely find any books at Amazon.com about

what it is like to live in small-town America—or, at least, any books written by normal people who grew up in small towns, liked them, and stayed there. The few books that do exist were written either by people who left the heartland because they hated it (Bill Bryson's *The Lost Continent*, for example) or by urbanites who moved to Red America as part of some life-simplification plan (*Moving to a Small Town: A Guidebook for Moving from Urban to Rural America*; National Geographic's *Guide to Small Town Escapes*). Apparently no publishers or members of the Blue book-buying public are curious about Red America as seen through Red America's eyes.

CROSSING THE MEATLOAF LINE

Over the past several months, my interest piqued by those stark blocks of color on the election-night maps, I have every now and then left my home in Montgomery County, Maryland, and driven sixty-five miles northwest to Franklin County, in south-central Pennsylvania. Montgomery County is one of the steaming-hot centers of the great espresso machine that is Blue America. It is just over the border from northwestern Washington, D.C., and it is full of upper-middle-class towns inhabited by lawyers, doctors, stockbrokers, and establishment journalists like me—towns like Chevy Chase, Potomac, and Bethesda (where I live). Its central artery is a burgeoning high-tech corridor with a multitude of sparkling new office parks housing technology companies such as United Information Systems and Sybase, and pioneering biotech firms such as Celera Genomics and Human Genome Sciences. When I drive to Franklin County, I take Route 270. After about forty-five minutes I pass a Cracker Barrel—Red America condensed into chain-restaurant form. I've crossed the Meatloaf Line; from here on there will be a lot fewer sun-dried-tomato concoctions on restaurant menus and a lot more meatloaf platters.

Franklin County is Red America. It's a rural county, about twenty-five miles west of Gettysburg, and it includes the towns of Waynesboro, Chambersburg, and Mercersburg. It was originally settled by the Scotch-Irish, and has plenty of Brethren and Mennonites along with a fast-growing population of evangelicals. The joke that Pennsylvanians tell about their state is that it has Philadelphia on one end, Pittsburgh on the other, and Alabama in the middle. Franklin County is in the Alabama part. It strikes me as I drive there that even though I am going north across the Mason-Dixon line, I feel as if I were going south. The local culture owes more to Nashville, Houston, and Daytona than to Washington, Philadelphia, or New York.

I shuttled back and forth between Franklin and Montgomery Counties because the cultural differences between the two places are great, though the geographic distance is small. The two places are not perfect microcosms of Red and Blue America. The part of Montgomery County I am

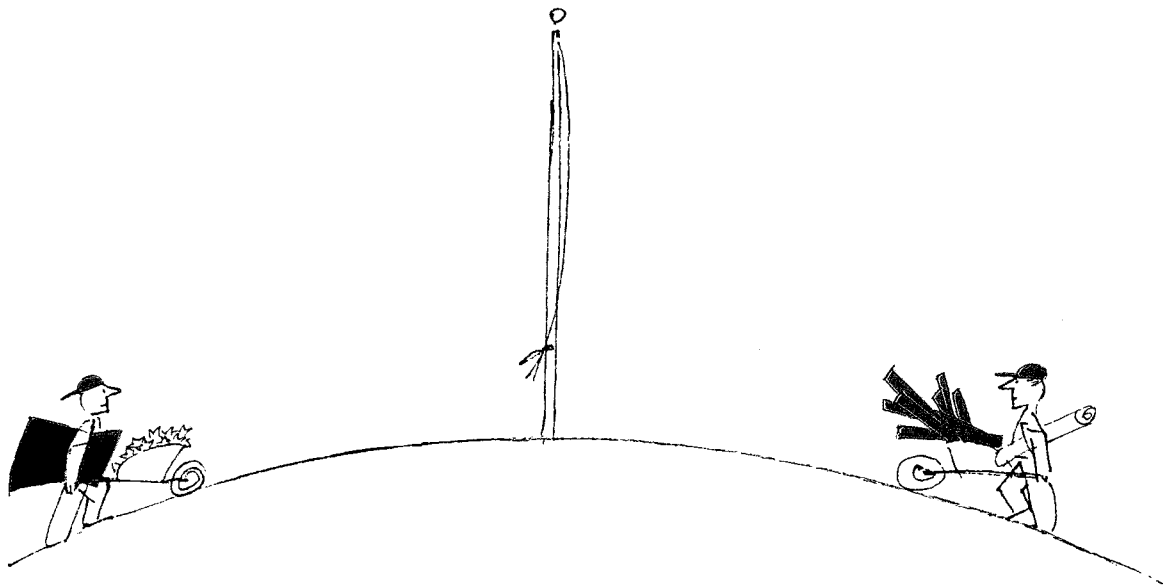
here describing is largely the Caucasian part. Moreover, Franklin County is in a Red part of a Blue state: overall, Pennsylvania went for Gore. And I went to Franklin County aware that there are tremendous differences within Red America, just as there are within Blue. Franklin County is quite different from, say, Scottsdale, Arizona, just as Bethesda is quite different from Oakland, California.

Nonetheless, the contrasts between the two counties leap out, and they are broadly suggestive of the sorts of contrasts that can be seen nationwide. When Blue America talks about social changes that convulsed society, it tends to mean the 1960s rise of the counterculture and feminism. When Red America talks about changes that convulsed society, it tends to mean World War II, which shook up old town establishments and led to a great surge of industry.

Red America makes social distinctions that Blue America doesn't. For example, in Franklin County there seems to be a distinction between those fiercely independent people who live in the hills and people who live in the valleys. I got a hint of the distinct and, to me, exotic hill culture when a hill dweller asked me why I thought hunting for squirrel and rabbit had gone out of fashion. I thought maybe it was just more fun to hunt something bigger. But he said, "McDonald's. It's cheaper to get a hamburger at McDonald's than to go out and get it yourself."

There also seems to be an important distinction between men who work outdoors and men who work indoors. The outdoor guys wear faded black T-shirts they once picked up at a Lynyrd Skynyrd concert and wrecked jeans that appear to be washed faithfully at least once a year. They've got wraparound NASCAR sunglasses, maybe a NAPA auto parts cap, and hair cut in a short wedge up front but flowing down over their shoulders in the back—a cut that is known as a mullet, which is sort of a cross between Van Halen's style and Kenny Rogers's, and is the ugliest hairdo since every hairdo in the seventies. The outdoor guys are heavily accessorized, and their accessories are meant to show how hard they work, so they will often have a gigantic wad of keys hanging from a belt loop, a tape measure strapped to the belt, a pocket knife on a string tucked into the front pants pocket, and a pager or a cell phone affixed to the hip, presumably in case some power lines go down somewhere and need emergency repair. Outdoor guys have a thing against sleeves. They work so hard that they've got to keep their arm muscles unencumbered and their armpit hair fully ventilated, so they either buy their shirts sleeveless or rip the sleeves off their T-shirts first thing, leaving bits of fringe hanging over their BAD TO THE BONE tattoos.

The guys who work indoors can't project this rugged proletarian image. It's simply not that romantic to be a bank-loan officer or a shift manager at the local distribution center. So the indoor guys adopt a look that a smart-ass, sneering Blue American might call Bible-academy casual—maybe Haggar slacks, which they bought at a dry-goods



store best known for its appliance department, and a short-sleeved white Van Heusen shirt from the Bon-Ton. Their image projects not “I work hard” but “I’m a devoted family man.” A lot of indoor guys have a sensitive New Age demeanor. When they talk about the days their kids were born, their eyes take on a soft Garth Brooks expression, and they tear up. They exaggerate how sinful they were before they were born again. On Saturdays they are patio masters, barbecuing on their gas grills in full Father’s Day-apron regalia.

At first I thought the indoor guys were the faithful, reliable ones: the ones who did well in school, whereas the outdoor guys were druggies. But after talking with several preachers in Franklin County, I learned that it’s not that simple. Sometimes the guys who look like bikers are the most devoted community-service volunteers and church attendees.

The kinds of distinctions we make in Blue America are different. In my world the easiest way to categorize people is by headroom needs. People who went to business school or law school like a lot of headroom. They buy humongous sport-utility vehicles that practically have cathedral ceilings over the front seats. They live in homes the size of country clubs, with soaring entry atriums so high that they could practically fly a kite when they come through the front door. These big-headroom people tend to be predators: their jobs have them negotiating and competing all day. They spend small fortunes on dry cleaning. They grow animated when talking about how much they love their blackberries. They fill their enormous wall space with huge professional family portraits—Mom and Dad with their perfect kids (dressed in light-blue oxford shirts) laughing happily in an orchard somewhere.

Small-headroom people tend to have been liberal-arts majors, and they have liberal-arts jobs. They get passive-aggressive pleasure from demonstrating how modest and environmentally sensitive their living containers are. They

hate people with SUVs, and feel virtuous driving around in their low-ceilinged little Hondas, which often display a RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS bumper sticker or one bearing an image of a fish with legs, along with the word “Darwin,” just to show how intellectually superior to fundamentalist Christians they are.

Some of the biggest differences between Red and Blue America show up on statistical tables. Ethnic diversity is one. In Montgomery County 60 percent of the population is white, 15 percent is black, 12 percent is Hispanic, and 11 percent is Asian. In Franklin County 95 percent of the population is white. White people work the gas-station pumps and the 7-Eleven counters. (This is something one doesn’t often see in my part of the country.) Although the nation is growing more diverse, it’s doing so only in certain spots. According to an analysis of the 2000 census by Bill Frey, a demographer at the Milken Institute, well over half the counties in America are still at least 85 percent white.

Another big thing is that, according to 1990 census data, in Franklin County only 12 percent of the adults have college degrees and only 69 percent have high school diplomas. In Montgomery County 50 percent of the adults have college degrees and 91 percent have high school diplomas. The education gap extends to the children. At Walt Whitman High School, a public school in Bethesda, the average SAT scores are 601 verbal and 622 math, whereas the national average is 506 verbal and 514 math. In Franklin County, where people are quite proud of their schools, the average SAT scores at, for example, the Waynesboro area high school are 495 verbal and 480 math. More and more kids in Franklin County are going on to college, but it is hard to believe that their prospects will be as bright as those of the kids in Montgomery County and the rest of upscale Blue America.

Because the information age rewards education with money, it’s not surprising that Montgomery County is much

richer than Franklin County. According to some estimates, in Montgomery County 51 percent of households have annual incomes above \$75,000, and the average household income is \$100,365. In Franklin County only 16 percent of households have incomes above \$75,000, and the average is \$51,872.

A major employer in Montgomery County is the National Institutes of Health, which grows like a scientific boomtown in Bethesda. A major economic engine in Franklin County is the interstate highway Route 81. Trucking companies have gotten sick of fighting the congestion on Route 95, which runs up the Blue corridor along the northeast coast, so they move their stuff along 81, farther inland. Several new distribution centers have been built along 81 in Franklin County, and some of the workers who were laid off when their factories closed, several years ago, are now settling for \$8.00 or \$9.00 an hour loading boxes.

The two counties vote differently, of course—the differences, on a nationwide scale, were what led to those red-and-blue maps. Like upscale areas everywhere, from Silicon Valley to Chicago's North Shore to suburban Connecticut, Montgomery County supported the Democratic ticket in last year's presidential election, by a margin of 63 percent to 34 percent. Meanwhile, like almost all of rural America, Franklin County went Republican, by 67 percent to 30 percent.

However, other voting patterns sometimes obscure the Red-Blue cultural divide. For example, minority voters all over the country overwhelmingly supported the Democratic ticket last November. But—in many respects, at least—blacks and Hispanics in Red America are more traditionalist than blacks and Hispanics in Blue America, just as their white counterparts are. For example, the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, in Washington, D.C., recently found that 45 percent of minority members in Red states agree with the statement "AIDS might be God's punishment for immoral sexual behavior," but only 31 percent of minority members in Blue states do. Similarly, 40 percent of minorities in Red states believe that school boards should have the right to fire homosexual teachers, but only 21 percent of minorities in Blue states do.

FROM CRACKS TO A CHASM?

These differences are so many and so stark that they lead to some pretty troubling questions: Are Americans any longer a common people? Do we have one national conversation and one national culture? Are we loyal to the same institutions and the same values? How do people on one side of the divide regard those on the other?

I went to Franklin County because I wanted to get a sense of how deep the divide really is, to see how people there live, and to gauge how different their lives are from those in my part of America. I spoke with ministers, journalists, teachers, community leaders, and pretty much anyone I ran across. I consulted with pollsters, demographers, and market-research firms.

Toward the end of my project the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were attacked. This put a new slant on my little investigation. In the days immediately following September 11 the evidence seemed clear that despite our differences, we are still a united people. American flags flew everywhere in Franklin County and in Montgomery County. Patriotism surged. Pollsters started to measure Americans' reactions to the events. Whatever questions they asked, the replies were near unanimous. Do you support a military response against terror? More than four fifths of Americans said yes. Do you support a military response even if it means thousands of U.S. casualties? More than three fifths said yes. There were no significant variations across geographic or demographic lines.

A sweeping feeling of solidarity was noticeable in every neighborhood, school, and workplace. Headlines blared, "A NATION UNITED" and "UNITED STATE." An attack had been made on the very epicenter of Blue America—downtown Manhattan. And in a flash all the jokes about and seeming hostility toward New Yorkers vanished, to be replaced by an outpouring of respect, support, and love. The old hostility came to seem merely a sort of sibling rivalry, which means nothing when the family itself is under threat.

But very soon there were hints that the solidarity was fraying. A few stray notes of dissent were sounded in the organs of Blue America. Susan Sontag wrote a sour piece in *The New Yorker* about how depressing it was to see what she considered to be a simplistically pro-American reaction to the attacks. At rallies on college campuses across the country speakers pointed out that America had been bombing other countries for years, and turnabout was fair play. On one NPR talk show I heard numerous callers express unease about what they saw as a crude us-versus-them mentality behind President Bush's rhetoric. Katha Pollitt wrote in *The Nation* that she would not permit her daughter to hang the American flag from the living-room window, because, she felt, it "stands for jingoism and vengeance and war." And there was evidence that among those with less-strident voices, too, differences were beginning to show. Polls revealed that people without a college education were far more confident than people with a college education that the military could defeat the terrorists. People in the South were far more eager than people in the rest of the country for an American counterattack to begin.

It started to seem likely that these cracks would widen once the American response got under way, when the focus would be not on firemen and rescue workers but on the Marines, the CIA, and the special-operations forces. If the war was protracted, the cracks could widen into a chasm, as they did during Vietnam. Red America, the home of patriotism and military service (there's a big military-recruitment center in downtown Chambersburg), would undoubtedly support the war effort, but would Blue America (there's a big gourmet dog bakery in downtown Bethesda) decide that a

crude military response would only deepen animosities and make things worse?

So toward the end of my project I investigated Franklin County with a heightened sense of gravity and with much more urgency. If America was not firmly united in the early days of the conflict, we would certainly not be united later, when the going got tough.

“THE PEOPLE VERSUS THE POWERFUL”

There are a couple of long-standing theories about why America is divided. One of the main ones holds that the division is along class lines, between the haves and the have-nots. This theory is popular chiefly on the left, and can be found in the pages of *The American Prospect* and other liberal magazines; in news reports by liberal journalists such as Donald L. Barlett and James B. Steele, of *Time*; and in books such as *Middle Class Dreams* (1995), by the Clinton and Gore pollster Stanley Greenberg, and *America's Forgotten Majority: Why the White Working Class Still Matters* (2000), by the demographer Ruy Teixeira and the social scientist Joel Rogers.

According to this theory, during most of the twentieth century gaps in income between the rich and the poor in America gradually shrank. Then came the information age. The rich started getting spectacularly richer; the poor started getting poorer; and wages for the middle class stagnated, at best. Over the previous decade, these writers emphasized, remuneration for top-level executives had skyrocketed: now the average CEO made 116 times as much as the average rank-and-file worker. Assembly-line workers found themselves competing for jobs against Third World workers who earned less than a dollar an hour. Those who had once labored at well-paying blue-collar jobs were forced to settle for poorly paying service-economy jobs without benefits.

People with graduate degrees have done well over the past couple of decades: their real hourly wages climbed by 13 percent from 1979 to 1997, according to Teixeira and Rogers. But those with only some college education saw their wages fall by nine percent, while those with only high school diplomas saw their wages fall by 12 percent, and high school dropouts saw a stunning 26 percent decline in their pay.

Such trends have created a new working class, these writers argue—not a traditional factory-and-mill working class but a suburban and small-town working class, made up largely of service workers and low-level white-collar employees. Teixeira and Rogers estimate that the average household income for this group, which accounts for about 55 percent of American adults, is roughly \$42,000. “It is not hard to imagine how [recent economic trends] must have felt to the forgotten majority man,” they write.

As at least part of America was becoming ever more affluent, an affluence that was well covered on television and in the evening news, he did not seem to be making

much progress. What could he be doing wrong to be faring so poorly? Why couldn't he afford what others could? And why were they moving ahead while he was standing still?

Stanley Greenberg tailored Al Gore's presidential campaign to appeal to such voters. Gore's most significant slogan was “The People Versus the Powerful,” which was meant to rally members of the middle class who felt threatened by “powerful forces” beyond their control, such as HMOs, tobacco companies, big corporations, and globalization, and to channel their resentment against the upper class. Gore dressed down throughout his campaign in the hope that these middle-class workers would identify with him.

Driving from Bethesda to Franklin County, one can see that the theory of a divide between the classes has a certain plausibility. In Montgomery County we have Saks Fifth Avenue, Cartier, Anthropologie, Brooks Brothers. In Franklin County they have Dollar General and Value City, along with a plethora of secondhand stores. It's as if Franklin County has only forty-five coffee tables, which are sold again and again.

When the locals are asked about their economy, they tell a story very similar to the one that Greenberg, Teixeira, Rogers, and the rest of the wage-stagnation liberals recount. There used to be plenty of good factory jobs in Franklin County, and people could work at those factories for life. But some of the businesses, including the textile company J. Schoeneman, once Franklin County's largest manufacturer, have closed. Others have moved offshore. The remaining manufacturers, such as Grove Worldwide and JLG Industries, which both make cranes and aerial platforms, have laid off workers. The local Army depot, Letterkenny, has radically shrunk its work force. The new jobs are in distribution centers or nursing homes. People tend to repeat the same phrase: “We've taken some hits.”

And yet when they are asked about the broader theory, whether there is class conflict between the educated affluents and the stagnant middles, they stare blankly as if suddenly the interview were being conducted in Aramaic. I kept asking, Do you feel that the highly educated people around, say, New York and Washington are getting all the goodies? Do you think there is resentment toward all the latte sippers who shop at Nieman Marcus? Do you see a gulf between high-income people in the big cities and middle-income people here? I got only polite, fumbling answers as people tried to figure out what the hell I was talking about.

When I rephrased the question in more-general terms, as Do you believe the country is divided between the haves and the have-nots?, everyone responded decisively: yes. But as the conversation continued, it became clear that the people saying yes did not consider themselves to be among the have-nots. Even people with incomes well below the median thought of themselves as haves.

What I found was entirely consistent with the election returns from November of last year. Gore's pitch failed miserably among the voters it was intended to target: nationally

he lost among non-college-educated white voters by 17 points and among non-college-educated white men by 29 points. But it worked beautifully on the affluent, educated class: for example, Gore won among women with graduate degrees by 22 points. The lesson seems to be that if you run a campaign under the slogan "The People Versus the Powerful," you will not do well in the places where "the people" live, but you will do fantastically well in the places where "the powerful" live. This phenomenon mirrors, on a larger scale, one I noted a couple of years ago, when I traveled the country for a year talking about *Bobos in Paradise*, a book I had written on upscale America. The richer the community, the more likely I was to be asked about wage inequality. In middle-class communities the subject almost never came up.

Hanging around Franklin County, one begins to understand some of the reasons that people there don't spend much time worrying about economic class lines. The first and most obvious one is that although the incomes in Franklin County are lower than those in Montgomery County, living expenses are also lower—very much so. Driving from Montgomery County to Franklin County is like driving through an invisible deflation machine. Gas is thirty, forty, or even fifty cents a gallon cheaper in Franklin County. I parked at meters that accepted only pennies and nickels. When I got a parking ticket in Chambersburg, the fine was \$3.00. At the department store in Greencastle there were racks and racks of blouses for \$9.99.

The biggest difference is in real-estate prices. In Franklin County one can buy a nice four-bedroom split-level house with about 2,200 square feet of living space for \$150,000 to \$180,000. In Bethesda that same house would cost about \$450,000. (According to the Coldwell Banker Real Estate Corporation, that house would sell for \$784,000 in Greenwich, Connecticut; for \$812,000 in Manhattan Beach, California; and for about \$1.23 million in Palo Alto, California.)

Some of the people I met in Franklin County were just getting by. Some were in debt and couldn't afford to buy their kids the Christmas presents they wanted to. But I didn't find many who assessed their own place in society according to their income. Rather, the people I met commonly told me that although those in affluent places like Manhattan and Bethesda might make more money and have more-exciting jobs, they are the unlucky ones, because they don't get to live in Franklin County. They don't get to enjoy the beautiful green hillsides, the friendly people, the wonderful church groups and volunteer organizations. They may be nice people and all, but they are certainly not as happy as we are.

Another thing I found is that most people don't think sociologically. They don't compare themselves with faraway millionaires who appear on their TV screens. They compare themselves with their neighbors. "One of the challenges we face is that it is hard to get people to look beyond the four-state region," Lynne Woehrlé, a sociologist at Wilson College, in Chambersburg, told me, referring to the cultural zone

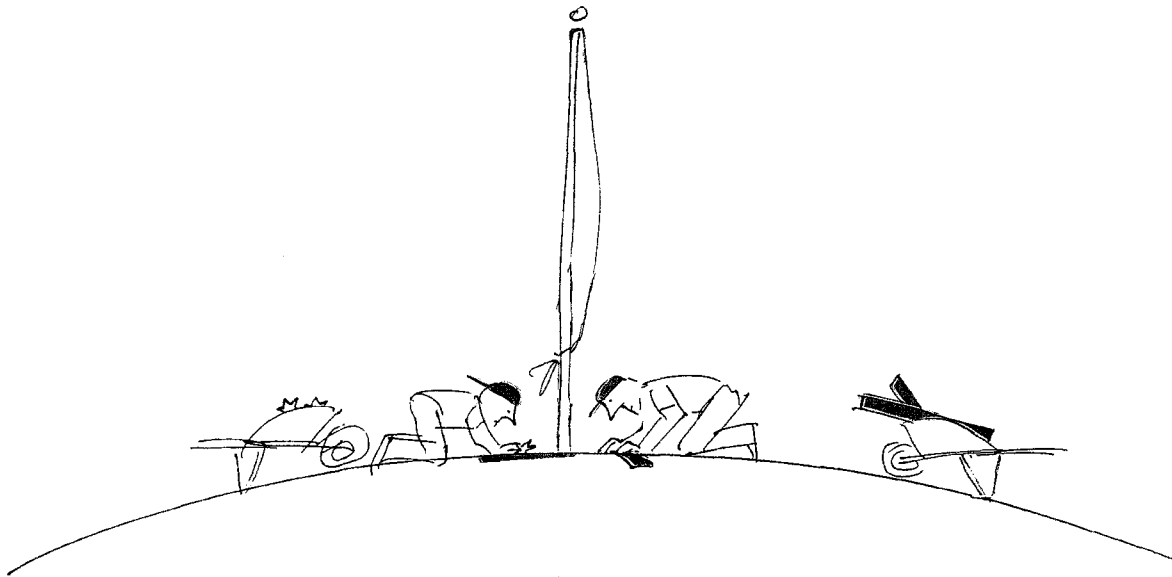
composed of the nearby rural areas in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland, and Virginia. Many of the people in Franklin County view the lifestyles of the upper class in California or Seattle much the way we in Blue America might view the lifestyle of someone in Eritrea or Mongolia—or, for that matter, Butte, Montana. Such ways of life are distant and basically irrelevant, except as a source of academic interest or titillation. One man in Mercersburg, Pennsylvania, told me about a friend who had recently bought a car. "He paid twenty-five thousand dollars for that car!" he exclaimed, his eyes wide with amazement. "He got it fully loaded." I didn't tell him that in Bethesda almost no one but a college kid pays as little as \$25,000 for a car.

Franklin County is a world in which there is little obvious inequality, and the standard of living is reasonably comfortable. Youth-soccer teams are able to raise money for a summer trip to England; the Lowe's hardware superstore carries Laura Ashley carpets; many people have pools, although they are almost always above ground; the planning commission has to cope with an increasing number of cars in the county every year, even though the population is growing only gradually. But the sort of high-end experiences that are everywhere in Montgomery County are entirely missing here.

On my journeys to Franklin County, I set a goal: I was going to spend \$20 on a restaurant meal. But although I ordered the most expensive thing on the menu—steak au jus, "slippery beef pot pie," or whatever—I always failed. I began asking people to direct me to the most-expensive places in town. They would send me to Red Lobster or Applebee's. I'd go into a restaurant that looked from the outside as if it had some pretensions—maybe a "Les Desserts" glass cooler for the key-lime pie and the tapioca pudding. I'd scan the menu and realize that I'd been beaten once again. I went through great vats of chipped beef and "seafood delight" trying to drop twenty dollars. I waded through enough surf-and-turfs and enough creamed corn to last a lifetime. I could not do it.

No wonder people in Franklin County have no class resentment or class consciousness; where they live, they can afford just about anything that is for sale. (In Montgomery County, however—and this is one of the most striking contrasts between the two counties—almost nobody can say that. In Blue America, unless you are very, very rich, there is always, all around you, stuff for sale that you cannot afford.) And if they sought to improve their situation, they would look only to themselves. If a person wants to make more money, the feeling goes, he or she had better work hard and think like an entrepreneur.

I could barely get fifteen minutes into an interview before the local work ethic came up. Karen Jewell, who helps to oversee the continuing-education program for the local Penn State branch campus, told me, "People are very vested in what they do. There's an awareness of where they fit in the



organization. They feel empowered to be agents of change.”

People do work extremely hard in Franklin County—even people in supposedly dead-end jobs. You can see it in little things, such as drugstore shelves. The drugstores in Bethesda look the way Rome must have looked after a visit from the Visigoths. But in Franklin County the boxes are in perfect little rows. Shelves are fully stocked, and cans are evenly spaced. The floors are less dusty than those in a microchip-processing plant. The nail clippers on a rack by the cash register are arranged with a precision that would put the Swiss to shame.

There are few unions in Franklin County. People abhor the thought of depending on welfare; they consider themselves masters of their own economic fate. “People are really into the free market here,” Bill Pukmel, formerly the editor of the weekly paper in Chambersburg, told me.

In sum, I found absolutely no evidence that a Stanley Greenberg–prompted Democratic Party (or a Pat Buchanan–led Republican Party) could mobilize white middle-class Americans on the basis of class consciousness. I found no evidence that economic differences explain much of anything about the divide between Red and Blue America.

Ted Hale, a Presbyterian minister in the western part of the county, spoke of the matter this way: “There’s nowhere near as much resentment as you would expect. People have come to understand that they will struggle financially. It’s part of their identity. But the economy is not their god. That’s the thing some others don’t understand. People value a sense of community far more than they do their portfolio.” Hale, who worked at a church in East Hampton, New York, before coming to Franklin County, said that he saw a lot more economic resentment in New York.

Hale’s observations are supported by nationwide polling data. Pew has conducted a broad survey of the differences between Red and Blue states. The survey found that views on economic issues do not explain the different voting

habits in the two regions. There simply isn’t much of the sort of economic dissatisfaction that could drive a class-based political movement. Eighty-five percent of Americans with an annual household income between \$30,000 and \$50,000 are satisfied with their housing. Nearly 70 percent are satisfied with the kind of car they can afford. Roughly two thirds are satisfied with their furniture and their ability to afford a night out. These levels of satisfaction are not very different from those found in upper-middle-class America.

The Pew researchers found this sort of trend in question after question. Part of the draft of their report is titled “Economic Divide Dissolves.”

A LOT OF RELIGION BUT FEW CRUSADERS

This leaves us with the second major hypothesis about the nature of the divide between Red and Blue America, which comes mainly from conservatives: America is divided between two moral systems. Red America is traditional, religious, self-disciplined, and patriotic. Blue America is modern, secular, self-expressive, and discomfited by blatant displays of patriotism. Proponents of this hypothesis in its most radical form contend that America is in the midst of a culture war, with two opposing armies fighting on behalf of their views. The historian Gertrude Himmelfarb offered a more moderate picture in *One Nation, Two Cultures* (1999), in which she argued that although America is not fatally split, it is deeply divided, between a heartland conservative population that adheres to a strict morality and a liberal population that lives by a loose one. The political journalist Michael Barone put it this way in a recent essay in *National Journal*: “The two Americas apparent in the 48 percent to 48 percent 2000 election are two nations of different faiths. One is observant, tradition-minded, moralistic. The other is unobservant, liberation-minded, relativistic.”

The values-divide school has a fair bit of statistical evi-

dence on its side. Whereas income is a poor predictor of voting patterns, church attendance—as Barone points out—is a pretty good one. Of those who attend religious services weekly (42 percent of the electorate), 59 percent voted for Bush, 39 percent for Gore. Of those who seldom or never attend religious services (another 42 percent), 56 percent voted for Gore, 39 percent for Bush.

The Pew data reveal significant divides on at least a few values issues. Take, for example, the statement “We will all be called before God on Judgment Day to answer for our sins.” In Red states 70 percent of the people believe that statement. In Blue states only 50 percent do.

One can feel the religiosity in Franklin County after a single day’s visit. It’s on the bumper stickers: WARNING: IN CASE OF RAPTURE THIS VEHICLE WILL BE UNMANNED. REAL TRUCKERS TALK ABOUT JESUS ON CHANNEL 10. It’s on the radio. The airwaves are filled not with the usual mixture of hit tunes but with evangelicals preaching the gospel. The book section of Wal-Mart features titles such as *The Beginner’s Guide to Fasting*, *Deepen Your Conversation with God*, and *Are We Living in the End Times?* Some general stores carry the “Heroes of the Faith” series, which consists of small biographies of William Carey, George Müller, and other notable missionaries, ministers, and theologians—notable in Red America, that is, but largely unknown where I live.

Chambersburg and its vicinity have eighty-five churches and one synagogue. The Bethesda–Chevy Chase area, which has a vastly greater population, has forty-five churches and five synagogues. Professors at the local college in Chambersburg have learned not to schedule public lectures on Wednesday nights, because everybody is at prayer meetings.

Events that are part of daily life in Franklin County are unheard of in most of Blue America. One United Brethren minister told me that he is asked to talk about morals in the public school as part of the health and sex-education curriculum, and nobody raises a fuss. A number of schools have a “Bible release program,” whereby elementary school students are allowed to leave school for an hour a week to attend Bible-study meetings. At an elementary school in Waynesboro the Gideons used to distribute Bibles to any students who wanted them. (That ended after the village agnostic threatened to simultaneously distribute a booklet called *God Is Just Pretend*.)

There are healing ministries all throughout Franklin County, and even mainstream denominations have healing teams on hand after Sunday services. As in most places where evangelism is strong, the locals are fervently pro-Israel. Almost every minister I visited has mementos in his study from visits to Jerusalem. A few had lived in Israel for extended periods and spoke Hebrew. One delivered a tirade against CNN for its bias against the Jewish state. One or two pointed out (without quite bragging) that whereas some Jewish groups had canceled trips to Israel since the upsurge in intifada violence, evangelical groups were still going.

David Rawley, a United Brethren minister in Green-castle, spoke for many of the social conservatives I met when he said that looking at the mainstream Hollywood culture made him feel that he was “walking against the current.” “The tremendous force of culture means we can either float or fight,” Rawley said. “Should you drift or stand on a rock? I tell people there is a rock we can hang on—the word of God. That rock will never give way. That rock’s never going to move.” When I asked Rawley what he thought of big-city culture, he said, “The individual is swallowed up by the largeness of the city. I see a world that doesn’t want to take responsibility for itself. They have the babies but they decide they’re not going to be the daddies. I’d really have to cling to the rock if I lived there.”

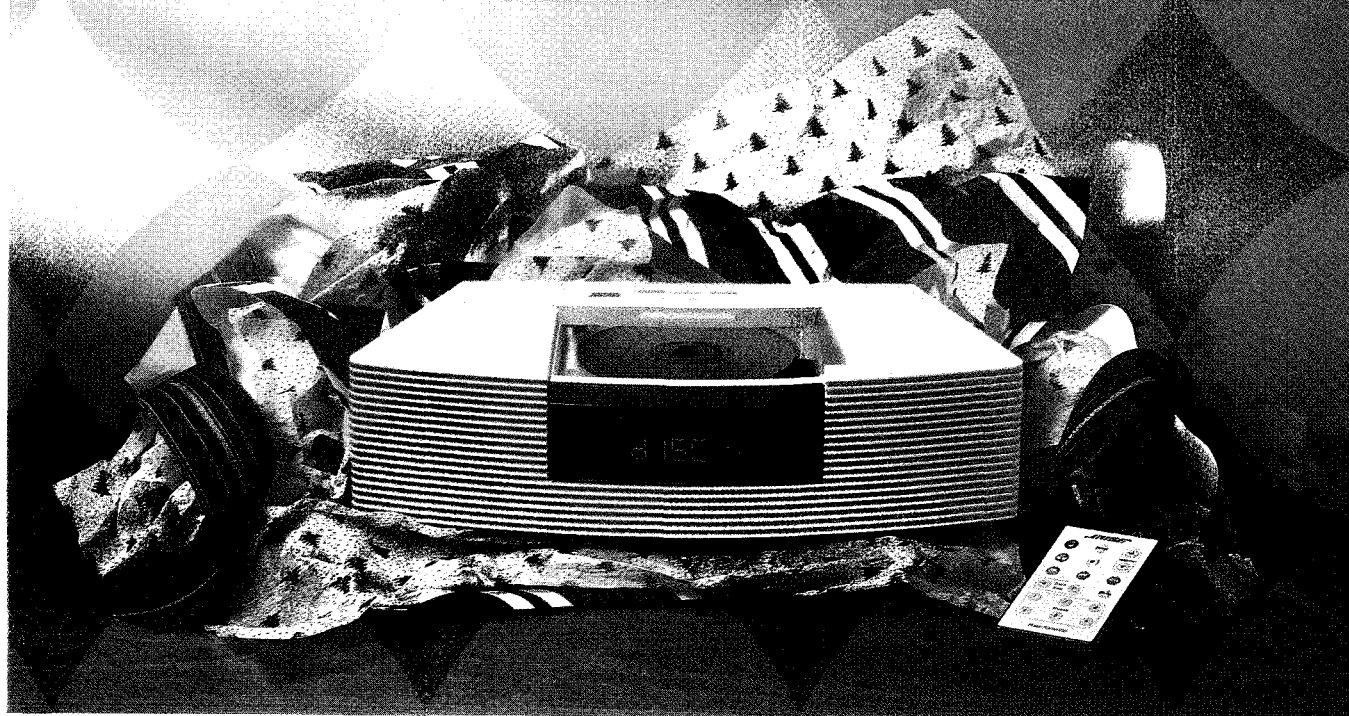
I met with Rawley at the height of the scandal involving Representative Gary Condit and the missing intern Chandra Levy. Levy’s mother was quoted in *The Washington Times* as calling herself a “Heinz 57 mutt” when it came to religion. “All religions tie to similar beliefs,” she said. “I believe in spirituality and God. I’m Jewish. I think we have a wonderful religion. I’m also Christian. I do believe in Jesus, too.” The contrast between her New Age approach to spirituality and Rawley’s Red America one could not have been greater.

Life is complicated, however. Yes, there are a lot of churches in Franklin County; there are also a lot of tattoo parlors. And despite all the churches and bumper stickers, Franklin County doesn’t seem much different from anywhere else. People go to a few local bars to hang out after softball games. Teenagers drive recklessly along fast-food strips. Young women in halter tops sometimes prowls in the pool halls. The local college has a gay-and-lesbian group. One conservative clergyman I spoke with estimated that 10 percent of his congregants are gay. He believes that church is the place where one should be able to leave the controversy surrounding this sort of issue behind. Another described how his congregation united behind a young man who was dying of AIDS.

Sex seems to be on people’s minds almost as much as it is anywhere else. Conservative evangelical circles have their own sex manuals (Tim LaHaye wrote one of them before he moved on to the “Left Behind” series), which appear to have had some effect: according to a 1994 study conducted by researchers at the University of Chicago, conservative Protestant women have more orgasms than any other group.

Franklin County is probably a bit more wholesome than most suburbs in Blue America. (The notion that deviance and corruption lie underneath the seeming conformism of suburban middle-class life, popular in Hollywood and in creative-writing workshops, is largely nonsense.) But it has most of the problems that afflict other parts of the country: heroin addiction, teen pregnancy, and so on. Nobody I spoke to felt part of a pristine culture that is exempt from the problems of the big cities. There are even enough spec-

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tacular crimes in Franklin County to make a devoted *New York Post* reader happy. During one of my visits the front pages of the local papers were ablaze with the tale of a young woman arrested for assault and homicide after shooting her way through a Veterans of the Vietnam War post. It was reported that she had intended to rob the post for money to run away with her lesbian girlfriend.

If the problems are the same as in the rest of America, so are many of the solutions. Franklin County residents who find themselves in trouble go to their clergy first, but they are often referred to psychologists and therapists as part of their recovery process. Prozac is a part of life.

Almost nobody I spoke with understood, let alone embraced, the concept of a culture war. Few could see themselves as fighting such a war, in part because few have any idea where the boundary between the two sides lies. People in Franklin County may have a clear sense of what constitutes good or evil (many people in Blue America have trouble with the very concept of evil), but they will say that good and evil are in all neighborhoods, as they are in all of us. People take the Scriptures seriously but have no interest in imposing them on others. One finds little crusader zeal in Franklin County. For one thing, people in small towns don't want to offend people whom they'll be encountering on the street for the next fifty years. Potentially controversial subjects are often played down. "We would never take a stance on gun control or abortion," Sue Hadden, the editor of the Waynesboro paper, told me. Whenever I asked what

the local view of abortion was, I got the same response: "We don't talk about it much," or "We try to avoid that subject." Bill Pukmel, the former Chambersburg newspaper editor, says, "A majority would be opposed to abortion around here, but it wouldn't be a big majority." It would simply be uncivil to thrust such a raw disagreement in people's faces.

William Harter, a Presbyterian minister in Chambersburg, spans the divide between Red and Blue America. Harter was raised on a farm near Buffalo. He went to the prestigious Deerfield Academy, in Massachusetts, before getting a bachelor's degree in history from Williams College, a master's in education from Harvard, and, after serving for a while in the military, a Ph.D. in Judaism and Christian origins from the Union Theological Seminary, in Manhattan. He has lived in Chambersburg for the past twenty-four years, and he says that the range of opinion in Franklin County is much wider than it was in Cambridge or New York. "We're more authentically pluralistic here," he told me.

I found Harter and the other preachers in Franklin County especially interesting to talk with. That was in part because the ones I met were fiercely intelligent and extremely well read, but also because I could see them wrestling with the problem of how to live according to the Scriptures while being inclusive and respectful of others' freedoms. For example, many of them struggle over whether it is right to marry a couple who are already living together. This would not be a consideration in most of Blue America.

"Some of the evangelicals won't marry [such couples]."

CHANNEL

It had come up from the night depth of the lake to bend and chatter the rod as it lunged under the boat, and now it flopped in the net until I had it in a slippery scrimmage on the aluminum floor: suave as a satyr's haunch, but Appaloosaed with dots, treble-spined, and whiskered like Confucius. And now, as I pliered open the jaws and took the hook it had taken, it made something like a bee-buzz. From deep in its mouth that was white as a Ping-Pong ball, it made something like absolution; and then it curled in the icebox, whacking the beers with its tail; and still, there it was. I do not like to hurt a thing alive, even a catfish, so slow to perish not even Saint Thomas Aquinas or W. C. Fields could raise the eloquence to free its killer of guilt. In Florida, catfish walk. Nailed to an oak, skin peeled like wallpaper, catfish won't stop talking with twitches. But what they say improves on guilt. You have to have waited many nights, with your face blackening from the smoke of burning tires, and shined your light on a belled rod ringing over stones and going fast into the river, to know that their lives mean as much as your life. And what is your life? The bottom of a shallow place? Magnificences? You hold them carefully. You listen, and they say your name in ancient Catfish.

—RODNEY JONES

Harter told me. "Others will insist that they live apart for six months before they'll marry them. But that's not the real world. These couples often don't understand the theological basis for not living together. Even if you don't condone their situations, you have to start where they are—help them have loyal marriages."

Divorce is tolerated much more than it used to be. And none of the ministers I spoke with said that they would condemn a parishioner who was having an affair. They would confront the parishioner, but with the goal of gently bringing that person back to Jesus Christ. "How could I love that person if I didn't?" Patrick Jones, of the United Brethren's King Street Church, in Chambersburg, asked. People in Franklin County are contemptuous of Bill Clinton and his serial infidelities, but they are not necessarily fans of Kenneth Starr—at least not the Kenneth Starr the media portrayed. They don't like public scolds.

Roger Murray, a Pentecostal minister in Mercersburg, whose father was also a Pentecostal minister, exemplifies the way in which many church authorities are torn by the sometimes conflicting desires to uphold authority and respect personal freedom. "My father would preach about what you could do and what you couldn't do," Murray recalls. "He would preach about smoking, about TV, about ladies who dress provocatively, against divorce." As a boy, Murray used to go visit his uncle, and he would sit in another room when his uncle's family watched television. "I was sure they were going to hell," he told me. But now he would never dream of telling people how to live. For one thing, his congregants wouldn't defer. And he is in no rush to condemn others. "I don't think preaching against homosexuality is what you should do," he told me. "A positive message works better."

Like most of the people I met in Franklin County, Murray regards such culture warriors as Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson as loose cannons, and televangelists as being far too interested in raising money. "I get pretty disgusted with Christian TV," he said. And that was before Falwell and Robertson made their notorious comments about the attacks of September 11 being a judgment from God. When I asked locals about those remarks, they answered with words like "disgusting," "horrendous," and "horrible." Almost no one in the county voted for Pat Buchanan; he was simply too contentious.

Certainly Red and Blue America disagree strongly on some issues, such as homosexuality and abortion. But for the most part the disagreements are not large. For example, the Pew researchers asked Americans to respond to the statement "There are clear guidelines about what's good or evil that apply to everyone regardless of their situation." Forty-three percent of people in Blue states and 49 percent of people in Red states agreed. Forty-seven percent of Blue America and 55 percent of Red America agreed with the statement "I have old-fashioned values about family and

marriage." Seventy percent of the people in Blue states and 77 percent of the people in Red states agreed that "too many children are being raised in day-care centers these days." These are small gaps. And, the Pew researchers found, there is no culture gap at all among suburban voters. In a Red state like Arizona suburban voters' opinions are not much different from those in a Blue state like Connecticut. The starkest differences that exist are between people in cities and people in rural areas, especially rural areas in the South.

The conservatism I found in Franklin County is not an ideological or a reactionary conservatism. It is a temperamental conservatism. People place tremendous value on being agreeable, civil, and kind. They are happy to sit quietly with one another. They are hesitant to stir one another's passions. They appreciate what they have. They value continuity and revere the past. They work hard to reinforce community bonds. Their newspapers are filled with items about fundraising drives, car washes, bake sales, penny-collection efforts, and auxiliary thrift shops. Their streets are lined with lodges: VFW, Rotarians, Elks, Moose. Luncheons go on everywhere. Retired federal employees will be holding their weekly luncheon at one restaurant, Harley riders at another. I became fascinated by a group called the Tuscarora Longbeards, a local chapter of something called the National Wild Turkey Federation. The Longbeards go around to schools distributing Wild About Turkey Education boxes, which contain posters, lesson plans, and CD-ROMs on turkey preservation.

These are the sorts of things that really mobilize people in Franklin County. Building community and preserving local ways are far more important to them than any culture war.

THE EGO CURTAIN

The best explanation of the differences between people in Montgomery and Franklin Counties has to do with sensibility, not class or culture. If I had to describe the differences between the two sensibilities in a single phrase, it would be conception of the self. In Red America the self is small. People declare in a million ways, "I am normal. Nobody is better, nobody is worse. I am humble before God." In Blue America the self is more commonly large. People say in a million ways, "I am special. I have carved out my own unique way of life. I am independent. I make up my own mind."

In Red America there is very little one-upmanship. Nobody tries to be avant-garde in choosing a wardrobe. The chocolate-brown suits and baggy denim dresses hanging in local department stores aren't there by accident; people conspicuously want to be seen as not trying to dress to impress.

For a person in Blue America the blandness in Red America can be a little oppressive. But it's hard not to be struck by the enormous social pressure not to put on airs. If

a Franklin County resident drove up to church one day in a shiny new Lexus, he would face huge waves of disapproval. If one hired a nanny, people would wonder who died and made her queen.

In Franklin County people don't go looking for obscure beers to demonstrate their connoisseurship. They wear T-shirts and caps with big-brand names on them—Coke, McDonald's, Chevrolet. In Bethesda people prefer cognoscenti brands—the Black Dog restaurant, or the independent bookstore Politics and Prose. In Franklin County it would be an affront to the egalitarian ethos to put a Princeton sticker on the rear window of one's car. In Montgomery County some proud parents can barely see through their back windows for all the Ivy League stickers. People in Franklin County say they felt comfortable voting for Bush, because if he came to town he wouldn't act superior to anybody else; he could settle into a barber's chair and fit right in. They couldn't stand Al Gore, because they thought he'd always be trying to awe everyone with his accomplishments. People in Montgomery County tended to admire Gore's accomplishments. They were leery of Bush, because for most of his life he seemed not to have achieved anything.

I sometimes think that Franklin County takes its unpretentiousness a little too far. I wouldn't care to live there, because I'd find it too unchanging. I prefer the subtle and not-so-subtle status climbing on my side of the Ego Curtain—it's more entertaining. Still, I can't help respecting the genuine modesty of Franklin County people. It shows up strikingly in data collected by Mediamark Research. In survey after survey, residents of conservative Red America come across as humbler than residents of liberal Blue America. About half of those who describe themselves as "very conservative" agree with the statement "I have more ability than most people," but nearly two thirds of those who describe themselves as "very liberal" agree. Only 53 percent of conservatives agree with the statement "I consider myself an intellectual," but 75 percent of liberals do. Only 23 percent of conservatives agree with the statement "I must admit that I like to show off," whereas 43 percent of liberals do.

A CAFETERIA NATION

These differences in sensibility don't in themselves mean that America has become a fundamentally divided nation. As the sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset pointed out in *The First New Nation* (1963), achievement and equality are the two rival themes running throughout American history. Most people, most places, and most epochs have tried to intertwine them in some way.

Moreover, after bouncing between Montgomery and Franklin Counties, I became convinced that a lot of our fear that America is split into rival camps arises from mistaken notions of how society is shaped. Some of us still carry the old Marxist categories in our heads. We think that society is like a layer cake, with the upper class on top. And, like

Marx, we tend to assume that wherever there is class division there is conflict. Or else we have a sort of *Crossfire* model in our heads: where would people we meet sit if they were guests on that show?

But traveling back and forth between the two counties was not like crossing from one rival camp to another. It was like crossing a high school cafeteria. Remember high school? There were nerds, jocks, punks, bikers, techies, druggies, God Squadders, drama geeks, poets, and Dungeons & Dragons weirdoes. All these cliques were part of the same school: they had different sensibilities; sometimes they knew very little about the people in the other cliques; but the jocks knew there would always be nerds, and the nerds knew there would always be jocks. That's just the way life is.

And that's the way America is. We are not a divided nation. We are a cafeteria nation. We form cliques (call them communities, or market segments, or whatever), and when they get too big, we form subcliques. Some people even get together in churches that are "nondenominational" or in political groups that are "independent." These are cliques built around the supposed rejection of cliques.

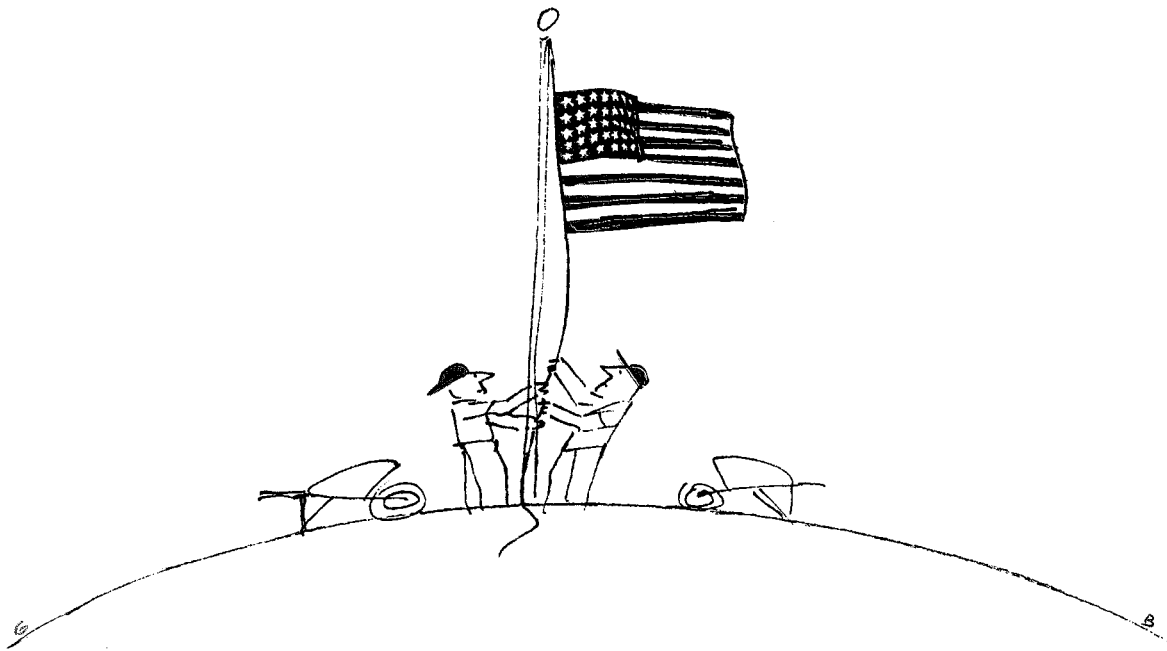
We live our lives by migrating through the many different cliques associated with the activities we enjoy and the goals we have set for ourselves. Our freedom comes in the interstices; we can choose which set of standards to live by, and when.

We should remember that there is generally some distance between cliques—a buffer zone that separates one set of aspirations from another. People who are happy within their cliques feel no great compulsion to go out and reform other cliques. The jocks don't try to change the nerds. David Rawley, the Greencastle minister who felt he was clinging to a rock, has been to New York City only once in his life. "I was happy to get back home," he told me. "It's a planet I'm a little scared of. I have no desire to go back."

What unites the two Americas, then, is our mutual commitment to this way of life—to the idea that a person is not bound by his class, or by the religion of his fathers, but is free to build a plurality of connections for himself. We are participants in the same striving process, the same experimental journey.

Never has this been more apparent than in the weeks following the September 11 attacks. Before then Montgomery County people and Franklin County people gave little thought to one another: an attitude of benign neglect toward other parts of the country generally prevailed. But the events of that day generated what one of my lunch mates in Franklin County called a primal response. Our homeland was under attack. Suddenly there was a positive sense that we Americans are all bound together—a sense that, despite some little fissures here and there, has endured.

On September 11 people in Franklin County flocked to the institutions that are so strong there—the churches and the American Legion and the VFW posts. Houses of worship held spontaneous prayer services and large ecumenical



services. In the weeks since, firemen, veterans, and Scouts have held rallies. There have been blood drives. Just about every service organization in the county—and there are apparently thousands—has mobilized to raise funds or ship teddy bears. The rescue squad and the Salvation Army branch went to New York to help.

Early every morning Ted Hale, the Presbyterian minister who once worked in East Hampton, goes to one of the local restaurants and sits as the regulars cycle through. One of the things that has struck him since the attacks is how little partisan feeling is left. “I expected to hear a certain amount of Clinton bashing, for creating the mess in which this could take place,” he told me in October. “But there’s been absolutely none of that.” Instead Hale has been deluged with questions—about Islam, about why God restrains himself in the face of evil, about how people could commit such acts.

The area’s churches have not been monolithic in their responses. Many of the most conservative churches—the Mennonites and the Brethren, for example—have pacifist traditions. Bill Harter, in contrast, told his congregation during a recent sermon that the pacifist course is not the right one. “We must face the fact that there is a power of evil loose in the universe, which is dedicated to attacking all that is good, all that comes from God,” he said. This evil, Harter continued, has cloaked itself in a perverted form of one of the world’s major faiths. Citing the Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, he reminded his congregants that there is no sinless way to defend ourselves against this hostile ideology. But defend we must. “We must humbly make our choice while recognizing that we must constantly turn to God for forgiveness,” he told them.

The churches and synagogues in Bethesda, too, have been struggling. Over the Jewish High Holy Days, I heard of three synagogues in which the sermon was interrupted

by a member of the congregation. In one instance the rabbi had said that it is always impossible to know where good and evil lie. A man rose up angrily to declare that in this case that sentiment was nonsense.

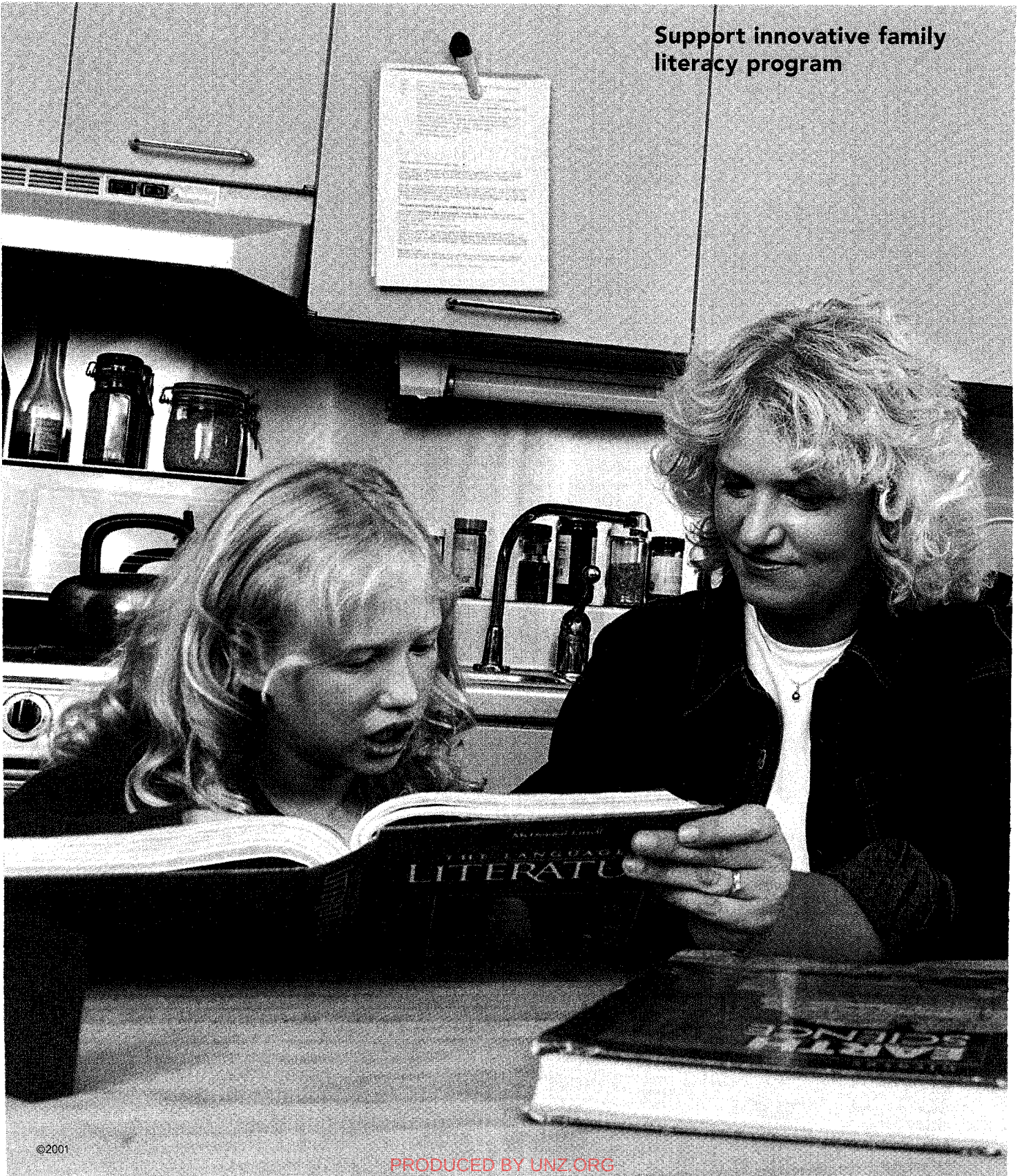
Most people in my part of Blue America know few who will be called on to fight in the war. In Franklin County military service is common. Many families have an enlisted son or daughter, and many more have a relative in the reserves or the National Guard. Franklin County is engaged in an urgent discussion, largely absent where I live, about how to fill in for the reservists called up for active duty.

Still, there’s an attitude of determination in both places. If I had to boil down all the conversations I have had in Franklin and Montgomery Counties since September 11, the essence would be this: A horrible thing happened. We’re going to deal with it. We’re going to restore order. We got through Pearl Harbor. We’re going to get through this. “There is no flaccidity,” Harter observed, in words that apply to both communities.

If the September 11 attacks rallied people in both Red and Blue America, they also neutralized the political and cultural leaders who tend to exploit the differences between the two. Americans are in no mood for a class struggle or a culture war. The aftermath of the attacks has been a bit like a national Sabbath, taking us out of our usual pleasures and distractions and reminding us what is really important. Over time the shock will dissipate. But in important ways the psychological effects will linger, just as the effects of John F. Kennedy’s assassination have lingered. The early evidence still holds: although there are some real differences between Red and Blue America, there is no fundamental conflict. There may be cracks, but there is no chasm. Rather, there is a common love for this nation—one nation in the end. ▀

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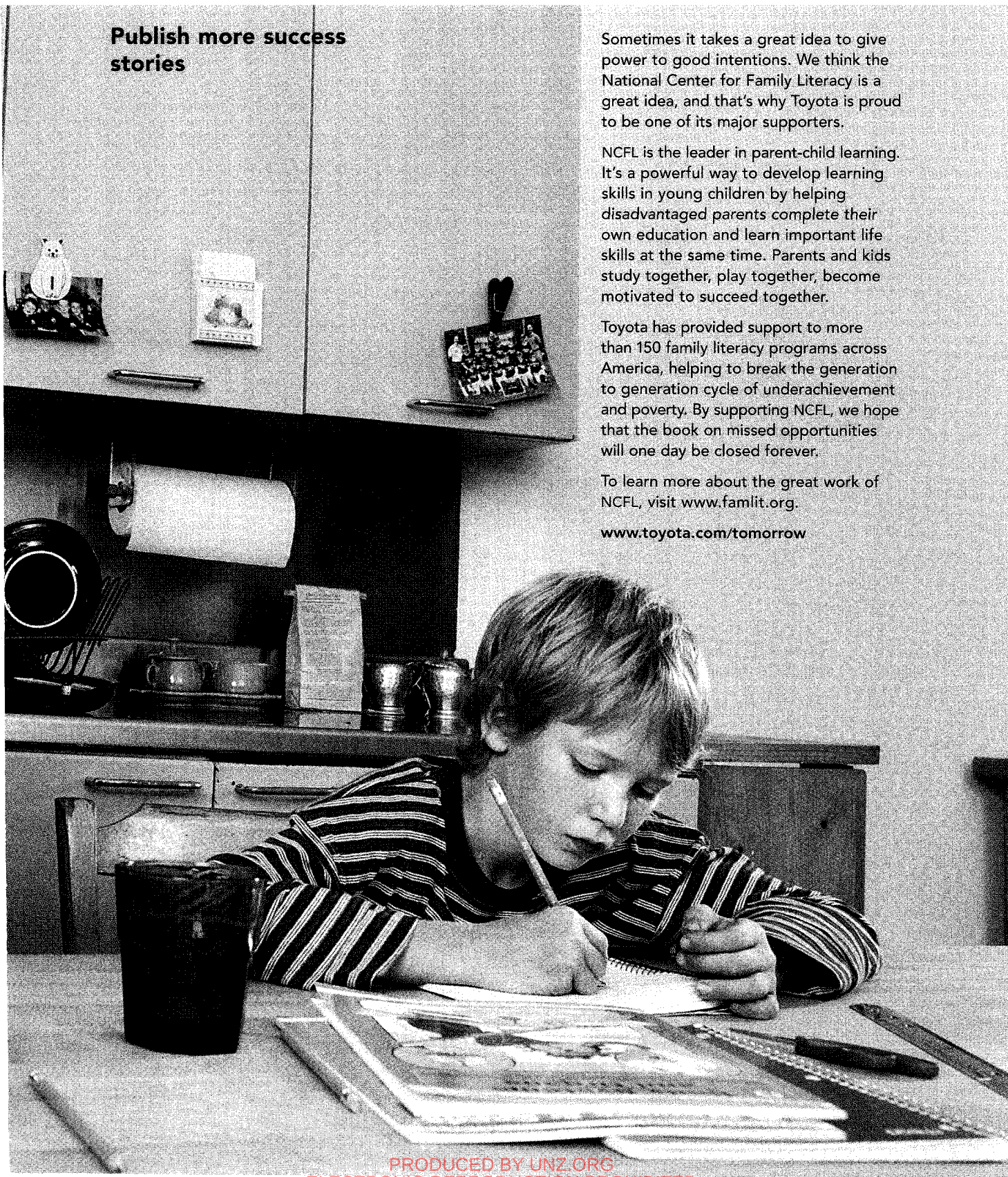
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LOOKING THE WORLD IN THE EYE

Samuel Huntington is a mild-mannered man whose sharp opinions—about the collision of Islam and the West, about the role of the military in a liberal society, about what separates countries that work from countries that don't—have proved to be as prescient as they have been controversial. Huntington has been ridiculed and vilified, but in the decades ahead his view of the world will be the way it really looks

BY ROBERT D. KAPLAN

Photograph by John Goodman

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I.

The most memorable review that Samuel Phillips Huntington, the Albert J. Weatherhead III University Professor at Harvard, ever got was a bad one. "Imagine," Huntington recalled recently, sitting in his home on Boston's Beacon Hill. "The first review of my first book, and the reviewer compares me unfavorably to Mussolini." He blinked and squinted shyly through his eyeglasses. Huntington, seventy-four, speaks in a serene and nasal voice, the East Bronx modified by high Boston. He described how the reviewer, Matthew Josephson, writing in the left-wing opinion magazine *The Nation*, had ridiculed the militarism and "brutal sophistries" of *The Soldier and the State* and had sneered that Mussolini's sentiments had been similar though his words had more panache: "Believe, obey, fight!"

The review was published on April 6, 1957. The Cold War was scarcely a decade old. *The Soldier and the State* constituted a warning: America's liberal society, Huntington argued, required the protection of a professional military establishment steeped in conservative realism. In order to keep the peace, military leaders had to take for granted—and anticipate—the "irrationality, weakness, and evil in human nature." Liberals were good at reform, not at national security. "Magnificently varied and creative when limited to domestic issues," Huntington wrote, "liberalism faltered when applied to foreign policy and defense." Foreign policy, he explained, is not about the relationship among individuals living under the rule of law but about the relationship among states and other groups operating in a largely lawless realm. *The Soldier and the State* concluded with a rousing defense of West Point, which, Huntington wrote, "embodies the military ideal at its best ... a bit of Sparta in the midst of Babylon."

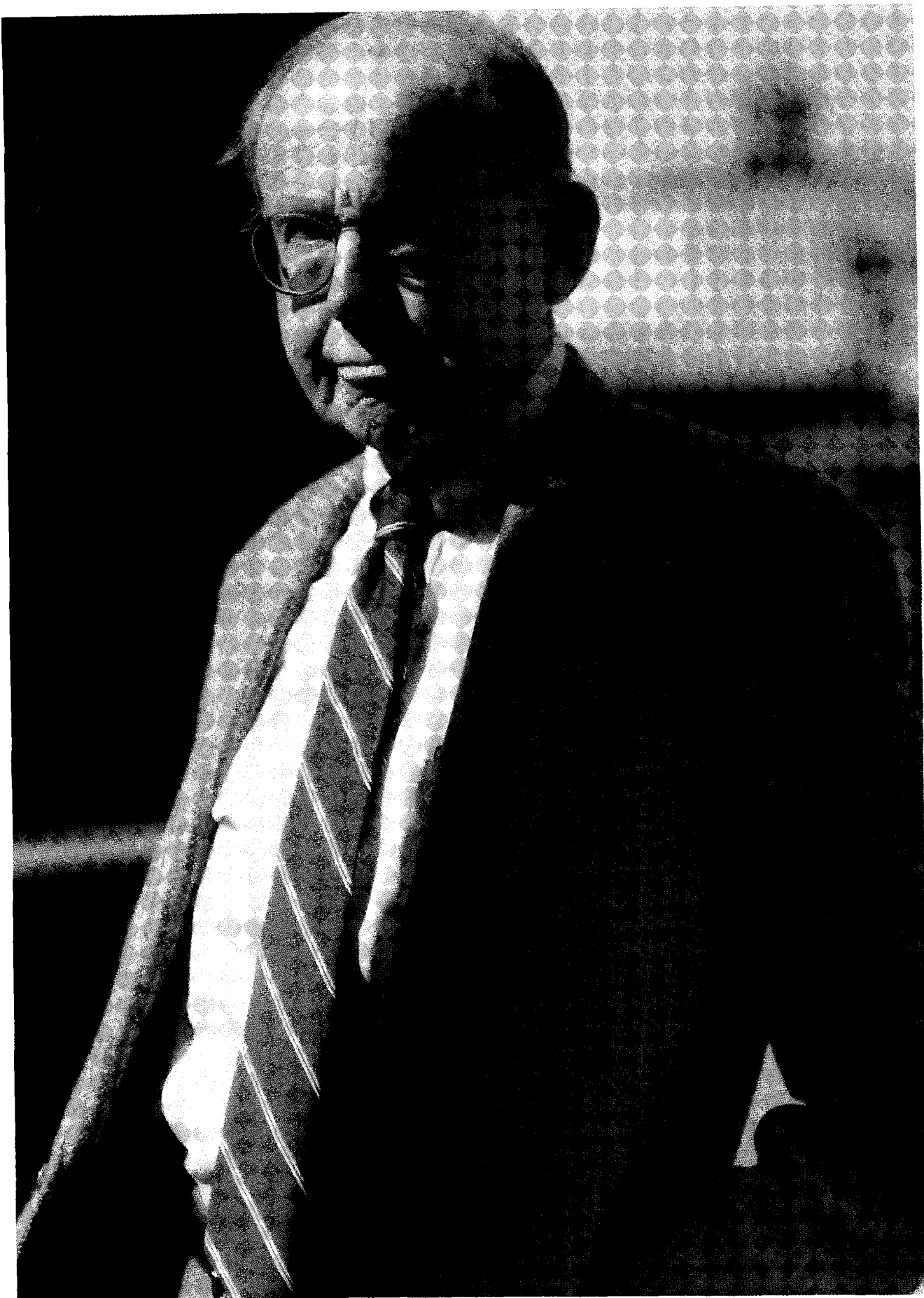
The book enraged many of Huntington's colleagues in Harvard's Department of Government, and the following year the department denied him tenure. With his close friend Zbigniew Brzezinski (whom Harvard also did not promote), Huntington went off to teach at Columbia University.

Four years later, in 1962, Harvard invited both Huntington and Brzezinski back, as tenured professors. Carl J. Friedrich, the German-born professor who had led the opposition to Huntington, met with him at Columbia. Friedrich talked of his admiration for the younger professor, until Huntington gently reminded him of his earlier hostility. It had become obvious to Friedrich and others that both Huntington and Brzezinski were rising stars in political science, and Harvard prided itself on its domination of the field. Brzezinski chose to stay at Columbia, but Huntington returned to Harvard, where he joined another rising star in the Department of Government, Henry A. Kissinger.

The Soldier and the State, now in its fourteenth printing, went on to become an academic classic. Telford Taylor, the chief American prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials, had this to say about the book when it was first published:

"Civilian control" [of the military] has become a piece of cant that politicians mouth worshipfully but with little understanding. This is an area where iconoclasm is badly needed; Professor Huntington's store of this commodity seems virtually inexhaustible, and it is refreshing to follow his trail of destructive exposure.

In recent decades scholarly commentary has focused less on one aspect of Huntington's book and more on another—less on the need for the military's sense of realism and more on the threat a military may pose to civilian authority.



Because democracies lack the disciplined political cadres that dictatorships produce, they are especially prone to subtle manipulation by powerful militaries. The Founding Fathers, Huntington observed, while providing for a separation of powers within civilian government, did not foresee the potential encroachment on civilian government of a gigantic defense establishment over time.

The Soldier and the State initiated what has become a familiar pattern in Huntington's long career: his work has not immediately earned brilliant reviews and academic awards but, rather, has garnered mixed reviews and harsh denunciations that ultimately yield to widespread if grudging acceptance. Even Huntington's enemies unwittingly define and worry about the world in ways and in phrases that originated with Huntington. Roger Hilsman, a specialist on Southeast Asia and a Huntington critic, complained in 1957 that many parts of *The Soldier and the State* "are noisy with the sounds of sawing and stretching as the facts are forced into the bed that has been prepared for them." Well, maybe. Nonetheless, *The Soldier and the State* put the issue of civil-military relations on the map.

The subject that Huntington has more recently put on the map is the "clash of civilizations" that is occurring as Western, Islamic, and Asian systems of thought and government collide. His argument is more subtle than it is usually given credit for, but some of the main points can be summarized.

- The fact that the world is modernizing does not mean that it is Westernizing. The impact of urbanization and mass communications, coupled with poverty and ethnic divisions, will not lead to peoples' everywhere thinking as we do.
- Asia, despite its ups and downs, is expanding militarily and economically. Islam is exploding demographically. The West may be declining in relative influence.
- Culture-consciousness is getting stronger, not weaker, and states or peoples may band together because of cultural similarities rather than because of ideological ones, as in the past.
- The Western belief that parliamentary democracy and free markets are suitable for everyone will bring the West into conflict with civilizations—notably, Islam and the Chinese—that think differently.
- In a multi-polar world based loosely on civilizations rather than on ideologies, Americans must reaffirm their Western identity.

The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon highlight the tragic relevance not just of Huntington's ideas about a clash of civilizations but of his entire life's work. Since the 1950s he has argued that American society requires military and intelligence services that think in the most tragic, pessimistic terms. He has worried for decades about how American security has mostly been the result of sheer luck—the luck of geography—and may one day have to be truly earned. He has written that liberalism

thrives only when security can be taken for granted—and that in the future we may not have that luxury. And he has warned that the West may one day have to fight for its most cherished values and, indeed, physical survival against extremists from other cultures who despise our country and who will embroil us in a civilizational war that is real, even if political leaders and polite punditry must call it by another name. While others who hold such views have found both happiness and favor working among like-minded thinkers in the worlds of the corporation, the military, and the intelligence services, Huntington has deliberately remained in the liberal bastion of Ivy League academia, to fight for his ideas on that lonely but vital front.

II.

The history of the intellectual battles surrounding American foreign policy since the early Cold War can be told, to an impressive degree, through Huntington's seventeen books and scores of articles. Kissinger and Brzezinski have also produced distinguished works of scholarship, but these men will be remembered principally for their service in government—Kissinger as National Security Advisor under Richard Nixon and Secretary of State under Nixon and Gerald Ford, and Brzezinski as National Security Advisor under Jimmy Carter. Huntington, though he served briefly in the Administrations of Lyndon Johnson and Carter, is a man of the academy to a far greater extent than his two friends. His ideas emerge from seminars and lectures, not from sudden epiphanies. If he couldn't teach, he probably couldn't write. And unlike many professors, he values his undergraduate students more than he does his graduate students. Graduate students, he told me, "are more reluctant to challenge this or that professor" and have often been "captured by the jargon and orthodoxy of the discipline."

One of his former undergraduates observes, "Other academics want to ram down your throat what they know, and then go on to the next victim. Huntington never dominates classroom discussions, and he listens intensely." Huntington disdains "rational-choice theory," the reigning fad in political science, which assumes that human behavior is predictable but which fails to take account of fear, envy, hatred, self-sacrifice, and other human passions that are essential to an understanding of politics. In an age of academic operators he is an old-fashioned teacher who speculates historically and philosophically on the human condition. His former students include Francis Fukuyama, the author of the famous post-Cold War anthem *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992), and Fareed Zakaria, the former managing editor of *Foreign Affairs* and the current editor of *Newsweek International*.

You aren't likely to see Huntington on C-SPAN, let alone on *The McLaughlin Group*. He is a worse than indifferent public speaker: hunched over, reading laboriously from a text. His status and reputation have come the hard way:

through writing books that, though often publicly denounced, have had a pervasive influence among people who count. Although he is the classic insider (a former president of the American Political Science Association and a co-founder of *Foreign Policy* magazine), he writes as an outsider, someone willing to enrage the very experts who will ultimately judge him. "If a scholar has nothing new to say he should keep quiet," Huntington wrote in 1959. "The quest for truths is synonymous with intellectual controversy."

In many ways Samuel Huntington represents a dying breed: someone who combines liberal ideals with a deeply conservative understanding of history and foreign policy. Huntington is a lifelong Democrat. He was a speechwriter for Adlai Stevenson in the 1950s (and met his wife, Nancy, during the 1956 campaign), a foreign-policy adviser to Hubert Humphrey in the 1960s, and one of the authors of Jimmy Carter's speeches on human rights in the 1970s. This same Huntington, though, is the founder of Harvard's John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies, a redoubt of foreign-policy realism that has been financed by a triad of conservative philanthropies: the John M. Olin Foundation, the Smith Richardson Foundation, and the Bradley Foundation.

When I suggested to Huntington that he is "an old-fashioned Democrat, the kind that no longer exists," he indulged in a rare display of emotional animation. He snapped in reply, "That's it—that's what I am. As Arthur Schlesinger would say, I am a child of

Niebuhr." Reinhold Niebuhr was the leading Protestant theologian of twentieth-century America—a devout Christian who believed that men are sufficiently wicked to require tough methods for the preservation of order. Huntington, an Episcopalian, was attracted to what he describes as Niebuhr's "compelling combination of morality and practical realism." Though an ardent Cold Warrior, Niebuhr never succumbed to moral triumphalism, believing that history was more profoundly characterized by irony than by progress. Even if the United States were to win the Cold War, Niebuhr wrote in 1952, this outcome might only cause the nation to overextend itself, dissipating its power in an excess of righteousness. Niebuhr's tragic sensibility constitutes a thread connecting all of Huntington's major works. It is the key to Huntington's definition of conservatism.

In the June, 1957, edition of *The American Political Science Review*, Huntington published a monograph titled "Conservatism as an Ideology." Liberalism, he wrote, is an ideology of individualism, free markets, liberty, and the rule of law. "Classic conservatism," in contrast, has no particular vision: it is a rationale, "high and necessary," for ensuring the survival of liberal institutions. Conservatism, Hunt-

ington observed, is the "rational defense of being against mind, of order against chaos." In England, he explained, Edmund Burke mounted a conservative defense of a "commercial society and a moderate, liberal constitution." Real conservatism is about conserving what is, rather than crusading abroad for what is not or proposing radical changes at home. In the United States, Federalists like John Adams and Alexander Hamilton expounded conservative principles to defend a liberal constitution. "The American political genius," Huntington wrote, "is manifest not in our ideas but in our institutions." And in his view, "The greatest need is not so much the creation of more liberal institutions as the successful defense of those which already exist."

III.

Samuel Huntington was born in 1927 in New York City and grew up in middle-class housing projects in the Astoria section of Queens and in the East Bronx. He was the only child of Richard Thomas Huntington, a publisher of hotel trade journals, and Dorothy Sanborn Phillips, a short-story writer, and he was the grandson of John Sanborn Phillips, the co-editor of the muckraking

magazine *McChure's*. Huntington was a prodigy. He went to Yale from Peter Stuyvesant High School at age sixteen and graduated with "exceptional distinction" after two and a half years. He served in the U.S. Army and then earned a master's degree in political

For those who thought that the end of the Cold War meant a less dangerous world, Huntington's thinking about a "clash of civilizations" was an insult.

science from the University of Chicago and a Ph.D. from Harvard. He believes that the strain of writing his Ph.D. dissertation over the course of four grueling months in 1950 is what precipitated the diabetes he suffers, which has necessitated six daily blood tests and three daily insulin injections ever since. (He interrupted our conversation to test his blood-sugar level and to jab himself with a syringe. After looking at the blood-sugar number, he said, "Good, I can have a salad and a glass of wine for lunch.") His doctoral dissertation, "Clientalism," carried on in the muckraking tradition of his grandfather. It described how federal agencies, notably the Interstate Commerce Commission, get taken over by the very industries that they are supposed to regulate. "We were all liberals, and Franklin Roosevelt was God," Huntington told me. "I couldn't imagine that anyone thought differently." Psychologically, Huntington's world at this time bore the imprint of the New Deal. Still, Harvard manifested an occasional irregularity. "There was one student who vigorously opposed collective bargaining, the minimum wage—all the conventional wisdom, in fact. It was quite a shock for all of us." This student, William Rehnquist, eventually left for Stanford Law School.

Two towering intellectual figures then ruled Harvard's Department of Government: Carl Friedrich and William Yandell Elliott. Friedrich, the more liberal of the two, had helped to write the constitution for the Federal Republic of Germany (that is, the old West Germany). Huntington gravitated toward Elliott, an Oxford-educated southerner and a conservative philosopher with much experience in Washington. Elliott believed in a vigorous stance against the Soviet Union and loathed moral relativism. "Elliott would travel to Cambridge once a week from Washington to meet with his graduate students," Huntington recalled. Among those profoundly influenced by Elliott was Huntington's contemporary Henry Kissinger. "We would wait in [Elliott's] outer office as the minutes went by, incensed that he was running late because of the time he took mentoring this one student, whom Elliott had identified as showing particular promise. Then the door would open and this chubby student would walk out." Kissinger dedicated his first book to Elliott: *A World Restored* (1957), which described Metternich's creation of a stable, post-Napoleonic world order. "Elliott was no great theorist," Kissinger told me, "but a good teacher is someone who sees talents in you that you didn't know you had. After I had written a paper on Kant, Elliott told me, 'You have a fine mind, but now you have to read novelists, like Dostoyevsky.' And so I read Dostoyevsky. This is how he helped his students grow."

Sweeping and icy statements dominate Huntington's books. These blunt judgments contrast sharply with Huntington's unimposing physical presence and unaffected demeanor. He looks like a character from a John Cheever story, someone you might forget that you had ever met. He blinks. He plays nervously with keys. He is balding, and stares intently at his palms as he talks. The fragile exterior conceals a flinty core. "Sam is very shy," Brzezinski says. "He's not one of those guys who can shoot the breeze at a bar. But get him into a debate and he is confident and tenacious." A former student says, "Sam is a geek with a backbone of steel." Another of his students demurs: "Sam isn't a geek. He's a quintessential Victorian man of honor—very quiet and contained, yet extraordinarily tough when the occasion demands."

In the early 1980s, walking home one night from a Cambridge dinner party with his wife and Francis Keppel, the retired dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Huntington was approached by three young men who demanded his money. "What?" Huntington asked. "We're not fucking around, we want your cash," one of the young men said before attacking him. Huntington repulsed him and wrestled him to the ground, calling for help. Then he

took on a second, who was on top of Keppel. Ultimately the three men ran off. Huntington did not volunteer this story: I learned about it from one of his former students, and then had to get the details from Nancy. When I asked Huntington himself about it, he said, "A week before there had been an article in one of the newsmagazines recommending that you shouldn't fight with a mugger. But my immediate impulse was to fight back."

IV.

From the outset Huntington's thinking has been focused on the big issues of the modern world; he was always interested in applying intellectual rigor to real-life concerns. Henry Kissinger's first book was largely inspired by early-nineteenth-century European history. Huntington's first book was inspired by what was going on in America when he was a graduate student. As Robert D. Putnam, of Harvard, has written in an essay on Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* was inspired by President Harry Truman's firing of General Douglas MacArthur for insubordination, in 1951. MacArthur's political generalship had disturbed Huntington, in part because it undermined the idea of a professional military. The military—and the U.S. Senate, another conservative institution—would later prove to be the most effective bulwarks against Senator Joseph McCarthy's assault on America's liberal values. *The Soldier and the State* was no apologia for

Huntington argues that liberalism thrives only when our national security can be taken for granted—and that in the future the United States may not have that luxury.

militarism, as some simplistic critiques have claimed, but, rather, a penetrating analysis of the relationship between the military and society.

The most telling passage in *The Soldier and the State* is in the preface, where the twenty-nine-year-old Huntington came to a conclusion that formed the template of an entire career. On the one hand, he conceded that "actual personalities, institutions, and beliefs do not fit into neat logical categories." But on the other, he argued passionately that "neat logical categories are necessary if man is to think profitably about the real world in which he lives and to derive from it lessons for broader application and use." A scholar, in order to say anything significant, is "forced to generalize." The true measure of a theory is not that it accounts for all the relevant facts but that it accounts for those facts "better than any other theory." Without abstraction and simplification there can be no understanding, Huntington maintained. Those who concentrate on the imperfections of a theory, without coming up with a better alternative, are helping no one. Thus begins a book of relentless, empirical generalizations.

From the end of the War of 1812 through the attack on

Pearl Harbor, Huntington wrote, Americans had little reason to worry about foreign threats. National security was taken for granted—an inheritance of geographical circumstance, rather than a creation of wise policy. With neither security nor economic expansion on a resource-rich continent in doubt, the liberal ideology that Americans acquired from their English forebears could be firmly established without contradiction. In the absence of any threat to the nation's liberal institutions, there was little need to defend them, and thus little need for real conservatism. Conservatives like Hamilton and Adams could thrive only because during the first years of the Republic it was surrounded by French, English, and Spanish territory, and was hampered by the British fleet. But for many decades thereafter no foreign threats existed on any significant scale, and the "low view of man" cultivated by conservatives entered a state of dormancy. Indeed, when President Woodrow Wilson read in the *Baltimore Sun* in 1915 that his general staff was preparing pragmatically for the possibility of war with Germany, he was "trembling and white with passion," and insisted to his aides that if the story was true, the staff officers should be fired. "Liberalism," Huntington observed, "does not understand and is hostile to military institutions and the military function."

Of course, the early twentieth century did witness a brief rebirth of Hamiltonian realism and interventionism, identified with the aggressive foreign policy of President Theodore Roosevelt. But the aversion to power politics was so deeply ingrained in the American psyche that Wilson's foreign-policy failures in the aftermath of World War I led to "abandoning intervention altogether and returning to liberal isolationism." With no one left to carry the torch of Hamilton, whose realist philosophy could reconcile the military to the rest of society, the American military in the interwar period withdrew into itself. It did so just as it was undergoing intensive professionalization and specialization, near the climax of the Industrial Revolution.

Huntington reminded us that the modern officer is a professional, whose job is the management of violence and whose client is the state. Although war is as old as humankind, a professional military essentially began with the Napoleonic Wars. The Founding Fathers put their uniforms on and off as the occasion demanded, and saw little distinction between soldiers and civilians. The Constitution does not provide for "objective civilian control" of government, which came about, again, because of the accident of geography: without a foreign threat, our standing army long remained small and politically weak, and could be reduced in size after every war. But the advance of technology that culminated in World War II, with Pearl Harbor and the atomic bomb, meant that geography was no longer a barrier. Security might at times have to take precedence over liberal values.

The liberal values that a democracy holds dear, Hunt-

ington explained, are also the values that can undermine a professional officer corps. "The heart of liberalism is individualism," he wrote. "It emphasizes the reason and moral dignity of the individual." But the military man, because of the nature of his job, has to assume irrationality and the permanence of violent conflict in human relations. "The liberal glorifies self-expression" because the liberal takes national security for granted; the military man glorifies "obedience" because he does not take that security for granted. A democracy may fight better than a dictatorship, because its middle-level officers are more inclined to make risky decisions; that is one reason for our success on the beaches of Normandy, and for the success of the Israelis over Arab armies. Nevertheless, a truly liberal military would lack the lethal effectiveness required to defend a liberal society threatened by technologically empowered illiberal adversaries.

Only conservatism, Huntington argued, proves properly conducive to military professionalism. Indeed, conservatism grows organically out of the military ethic that dominated society in ancient times. Conservatism recognizes the primacy of power in international affairs; it accepts existing institutions; and its goals are limited. It eschews grand designs, because it has no universal value system that it seeks to impose on others. The conservative mind, like the military one, believes that human beings learn only from human experience, which leads to an accent on the study of history. History forms the centerpiece of war-college curricula.

But don't assume, Huntington said, that the conservatism of the military is inherently reactionary, in an ideological sense. In nineteenth-century Europe the professionalization of militaries allowed men of all backgrounds to advance in the ranks; militaries challenged the aristocratic basis of society. In egalitarian America the dynamic between the military and society was bound to be different. The United States was already democratic, and under no threat. The military was more isolated, and over time it developed an ethos that was markedly more aristocratic than that of society. The more a liberal society isolates and reproaches the military, Huntington implied, the more conservative the military may become in response.

Now here is where the young Huntington really got interesting. Our very greatness, he said, is what makes it difficult for the American liberal mind to deal with the outside world. "American nationalism," he wrote, "has been an idealistic nationalism, justified, not by the assertion of the superiority of the American people over other peoples, but by the assertion of the superiority of American ideals over other ideals." French foreign policy can be whatever the French decide it is, provided it is in their momentary self-interest. But American foreign policy is judged by the criteria of universal principles. According to Huntington, this leads to a pacifist strain in American liberalism when it comes to defending our hard-core national interests, and

an aggressive strain when it comes to defending human rights. Although the professional soldier accepts the reality of never-ending and limited conflict, “the liberal tendency,” Huntington explained, is “to absolutize and dichotomize war and peace.” Liberals will most readily support a war if they can turn it into a crusade for advancing humanistic ideals. That is why, he wrote, liberals seek to reduce the defense budget even as they periodically demand an adventurous foreign policy. It came as no surprise to readers of *The Soldier and the State* that the same intellectuals and opinion-makers who consistently underappreciated NATO in the 1970s and 1980s, when the outcome of the Cold War remained in doubt, demanded aggressive NATO involvement in the 1990s, in Bosnia and Kosovo, when the stakes for our national security were much lower, but the assault on liberal principles was vivid and clear-cut.

The only way to preserve a liberal society, Huntington wrote, is to define the limits of military control. And the only way to do that across the uncertain decades and centuries ahead is to keep the military and the advice it offers strictly professional. Therefore, a soldier should recommend battle only in the case of national interest. If he is to fight for other reasons, even humanitarian ones, the pressure to do so must come from his civilian superiors.

In 1993 General Colin Powell, then the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, expressed opposition to U.S. military involvement in Bosnia and was branded a “political general” by some. But a reader of Huntington might think a little differently about Powell. If his client’s territory is under no direct danger, the professional officer cannot recommend “the involvement of the state in war except when victory is certain,” as Huntington wrote. Powell’s opposition to war in a case where the impact on our national interest was inconclusive and where victory appeared unsure was not so much a “Powell doctrine” as it was the age-old dictum of the military professional, who seeks to avoid becoming “political” and refuses to promote moral crusades, however justified they may be. (Of course, the military’s ability to intimidate our civilian leadership into inaction in Bosnia points up Huntington’s other realization: about how democracies are encroached on by overbearing defense establishments.)

The first decade of the Cold War indicated to Huntington that although tension would persist between a liberal society and a vast new defense establishment, the two would find ways to coexist. He saw Truman as a harbinger of this emerging order: liberal at home, but profoundly conservative in foreign affairs. It was the civilian business community, Huntington observed, that was now providing a bridge between the military and the rest of society. For many of us, big business embodies conservative pragmatism and what is known as the military-industrial complex. But Huntington exposed this image as a Cold War artifact. “Business pacifism” is how he describes the capitalist’s view of the

world through most of our earlier history. Religious moralism and economic liberalism combined to make most American businessmen see international trade and multilateral treaties as more important than power politics. The end of the Cold War has revived that view of the world. Liberals and neoconservatives who now worry about the American business community’s growing economic involvement with an authoritarian China are revisiting an old Huntington argument.

V.

By the mid-1960s Samuel Huntington had settled into the life of a Harvard professor, quietly raising a family in the Boston area. This life was briefly interrupted by an assignment for the Johnson Administration in 1967: as a State Department consultant, he prepared a 100-page report on the Vietnam War that was later declassified and used as the basis for an article in the July, 1968, issue of *Foreign Affairs*. The article caused a tremendous furor. It embraced the Administration’s objective of defeating the North Vietnamese, but explained why the Administration’s methods for achieving that objective were all wrong.

Huntington rejected the significance of the Johnson Administration’s claim that the proportion of the South Vietnamese population under government control (rather than under Viet Cong control) had risen from 40 percent to 60 percent. “This change,” he wrote, is “the result of the movement of the population into the cities rather than the extension of the Government’s control into the countryside”—where the Viet Cong were as strong as ever. But although the Johnson Administration was guilty of “unwarranted optimism,” the critics of the Administration, he asserted, were guilty of “misplaced moralism.” Huntington pointed out that the question *Whom does the majority of the population really support?* was relevant only in a stable constitutional democracy like America’s, not amid the mounting chaos and violence of a country like Vietnam. Further, winning popular support by promoting rural development would achieve nothing; it wasn’t rural poverty that drove people into the arms of the Viet Cong but, rather, “the absence of an effective structure of authority.” And where such a strong authority existed, Huntington wrote, “even though it be quite hierarchical and undemocratic, the Viet Cong make little progress.” The one third of the rural population that had withstood Viet Cong infiltration had done so because of tough ethnic and religious communal organizations that were often as inimical to Western values as the Viet Cong were. “Even back then we were nation-building,” Huntington told me, with disapproval. “We rejected religious and ethnic loyalties as counterweights to the Viet Cong because we wanted a modern, democratic nation-state with a national army. One problem with Vietnam was our idealism.”

Such idealism, he says, now characterizes other American involvements overseas: "The media appeal to our national egotism, which assumes our values and political structures are those the rest of the world wants; and if it doesn't want them, it ought to." Huntington believes that we should proclaim our values abroad in ways that allow us to take advantage of our adversaries but do not force us to remake societies from within. Thus in the late 1970s he helped Zbigniew Brzezinski and Jimmy Carter to implement a human-rights policy designed to embarrass the Soviet Union, but he has remained skeptical about putting troops on the ground to build Western-style democracy in places with no tradition of it.

Huntington's analysis of Vietnam derived from his newly emerging world view. In the 1950s and 1960s the big issue in social science was political modernization. The conventional academic wisdom was that new countries in Africa and elsewhere would develop democracies and legal systems similar to ours. Huntington would have none of this. His insight about Vietnam—that the kind of authority that worked there was not at all like ours—fit into the larger theme elaborated in his book *Political Order in Changing*

Societies (1968). *Political Order* is a study of how states are formed, and perhaps Huntington's most important book. In the fourteenth century the Arab historian Ibn Khaldun described in his *Muqaddimah* how desert nomads, in aspiring to the comforts of

a sedentary life, created the dynamic for urbanization that was then captured by powerful dynasties. Huntington continued the story. He described how development leads to new patterns of instability, including upheavals and revolutions, which result in the building of more-complex institutions. *Political Order in Changing Societies*, though written three and a half decades ago, is still the clearest road map to what developing countries face in their attempts to establish stable and responsive governments in an era of globalization. The book opens with a bold assertion.

The most important political distinction among countries concerns not their form of government but their degree of government. The differences between democracy and dictatorship are less than the differences between those countries whose politics embodies consensus, community, legitimacy, organization, effectiveness, [and] stability, and those countries whose politics is deficient in these qualities.

The statement that the distinction between democracies and dictatorships is less important than it seems will come as no surprise to those who have experienced the social chaos in, say, Nigeria and Ghana, despite the elections that

those countries hold, and have also experienced the relative openness and civil stability of more-autocratic societies such as Jordan, Tunisia, and Singapore. More than other academics, Huntington pays attention to ground-level realities. Throughout his career he has displayed an academically atypical fondness for quoting on-the-scene observers (as well as academics) in his footnotes. "There are no academic sources for recent events," he told me. "There is only academic opinion."

The central argument in *Political Order* is that despite what we may instinctively believe, the American historical experience is inappropriate for understanding the challenges that developing countries face. "Americans believe in the unity of goodness," Huntington wrote. They "assume that all good things go together"—social progress, economic growth, political stability, and so on. But consider India, he suggested. India had one tenth the per capita income of Argentina and Venezuela in the 1950s, yet it was politically more stable. Why? Part of the answer is something "bad": India's illiteracy. Illiteracy in India fostered democratic stability, because rural illiterates make fewer demands on government than a newly literate urban proletariat. Il-

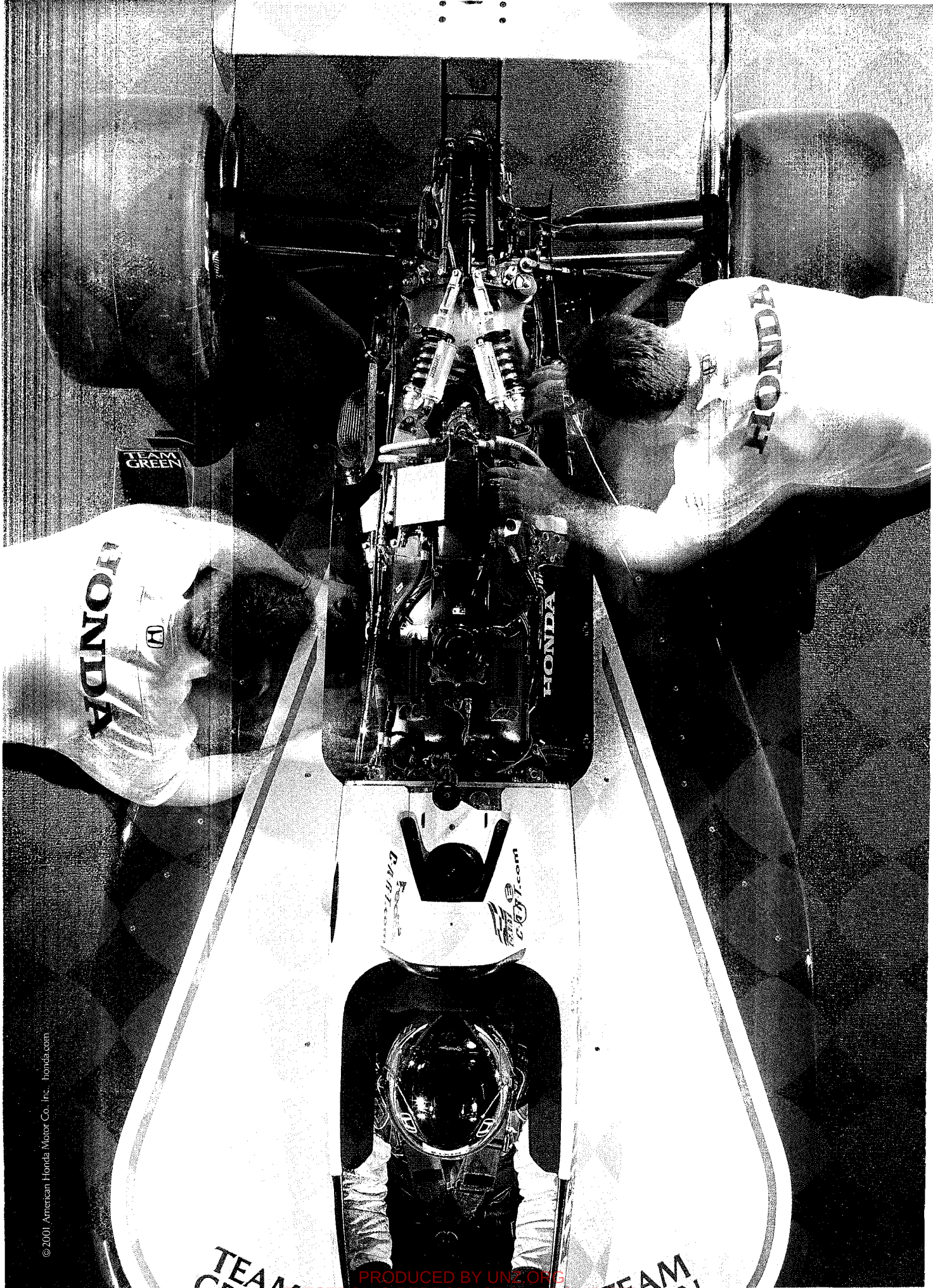
literate or semi-literate merely vote; literate people organize, and challenge the existing system. India, Huntington contended, was stable and democratic for decades despite its poverty because of an unusual combination of factors: a poorly educated electorate

and a highly educated elite large enough to administer modern governmental institutions. Now that a newly literate lower-middle class is emerging in India, the nation's politics have become far nastier.

Another problem for American thinking, Huntington continued, is that our history has taught us how to limit government, not how to build it from scratch. Just as our security, a product of geography, was largely unearned, so were our governing institutions and practices, an inheritance from seventeenth-century England. The Constitution is about controlling authority; throughout Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the formerly communist world the difficulty is to establish authority. "The problem," Huntington wrote, "is not to hold elections but to create organizations."

In politically advanced states loyalty is to institutions, not to groups. States like ours are the result of a long process of urbanization and enlightenment, but this process can be destabilizing in its own right. "The faster the enlightenment of the population, the more frequent the overthrow of the government," he observed. The French and Mexican Revolutions were preceded not by poverty but by sustained

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social and economic development. The economic growth that the global elite now champions around the world will lead to instability and upheaval before it leads to politically advanced societies.

At international conferences experts frequently wring their hands about corruption. *Political Order* demonstrates that the very modernization they champion causes corruption in the first place. The eighteenth century saw unprecedented levels of corruption in England, owing to the onset of the Industrial Revolution; the same can be said of nineteenth-century America. But corruption at this stage of development can be useful, Huntington wrote, and should not be high-mindedly disparaged. Corruption provides the means for assimilating new groups into the system. The selling of parliamentary seats, for example, is typical of an emerging democracy, and preferable to armed attacks against Parliament itself. Corruption, Huntington pointed out, is a less extreme form of alienation than violence: "He who corrupts a system's police officers is more likely to identify with the system than he who storms the system's police stations." In late-nineteenth-century America legislatures and city councils were corrupted by utilities, railway companies, and new industrial corporations—the same forces that were spurring economic growth and helping to make the United States a world power. In India many economic activities would be paralyzed without *baksheesh*. Corruption in moderate

doses can overcome unresponsive bureaucracy and be an instrument of progress.

At the same time, Huntington explained, the hurly-burly of modernization and corruption invites a puritanical reaction. The seamy trade-offs necessary for growth and stability are denounced by zealots, delegitimizing the political process. This happened in Iran a decade after *Political Order* was published.

The United States, Huntington said, has trouble understanding revolutionary ferment in the rest of the world because it never experienced a real revolution. Instead it went through a war of independence—and not even one "of natives against alien conquerors," like that of the Algerians against the French, but one of settlers against the home country. Real revolutions are different—bad—Huntington made clear. Fortunately, they are rare. Even as the proletariat in Third World slums continues to radicalize, the middle classes become increasingly conservative and more willing to fight for the existing order. Writing in the late 1960s, Huntington was describing the world of the early twenty-first century. When a revolution does occur, continued economic deprivation "may well be essential to its success."

The idea that food shortages and other hardships caused by economic sanctions will lead to the overthrow of a revolutionary regime like Saddam Hussein's or Fidel Castro's is nonsense, in Huntington's view. Material sacrifices, although intolerable in a normal situation, are proof of ideological commitment in a revolutionary one: "Revolutionary governments may be undermined by affluence; but they are never overthrown by poverty." The Spanish and Canadian developers now building hotels in Havana may know better than the American government does how to undermine a revolutionary regime.

Huntington portrayed the problem of revolutions, monarchies, praetorian regimes, and feudal states by drawing on a wealth of examples from all over the world. He offered a panorama of the messiness, intractability, and complexity of our times, even as he efficiently distilled and summarized. In one sentence (in *Political Order*) he laid out the different roles played by militaries throughout the twentieth century: "In the world of oligarchy, the soldier is a radical; in the middle class world, he is a participant and arbiter; as the mass society looms ... he becomes the conservative guardian of the existing order." A better

description of the changing role of the Turkish army over the decades, or of the evolving status of the Egyptian army, has never been written. Indeed, the more backward the society, the more progressive the role of the military may be—and the more cautious the West

Despite what we instinctively believe, Huntington says, the American experience is inappropriate for understanding the challenges that developing countries face.

should be about wanting to replace it with civilian politicians.

America's confidence in "democratic" reform for its own sake is misplaced. "Reform can be a catalyst of revolution," Huntington wrote, "rather than a substitute for it ... great revolutions have followed periods of reform, not periods of stagnation and repression." In any case, reform in underdeveloped societies is effected not by transparency and greater public participation but, as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk showed in Turkey, by "celerity and surprise—those two ancient principles of war." If a reform program is revealed gradually, a free press will dissect it and create opposition to it. Because one sector of society will support one reform but not another, a reformer must work by stealth, isolating one set of issues from the next, and often relying not on the media but on the gaps in communication that exist within a society.

But mass communications work their own magic, as Huntington admitted in a long coda to *Political Order* that he published later, *The Third Wave* (1991). This book, subtitled "Democratization in the Late 20th Century," has been called "universalist and militantly pro-democracy" by the French scholar and otherwise harsh Huntington critic

Pierre Hassner. Huntington has always been a liberal, but one who refuses to retreat into easy platitudes for the sake of a carefully constructed reputation. His books illustrate what academic tenure is supposed to be about but often isn't: the freedom, provided by occupational security, to express views that are (at least in the academy) unpopular, unconventional, unwelcome, and bold.

VI.

The 1960s presented Huntington with some trying moments. He was followed through Harvard Yard by chanting demonstrators, who had read in the *Harvard Crimson* about his association with the Johnson Administration. The Center for International Affairs, where Huntington worked, was occupied and then fire-bombed. Huntington's young son awoke one morning to find the words "War Criminal Lives Here" painted on the front door.

Huntington was not deterred from further government service. As noted, he joined the Carter Administration, and helped President Carter to craft a foreign policy that was an expression of our human-rights ideals. This was not a matter of soft sanctimony but a hard-edged tool that posed severe political problems for the Soviets. As the coordinator for security planning, a job created for him by Brzezinski, Carter's National Security Advisor, Huntington also wrote "Presidential Directive 18," a comprehensive overview of U.S.-Soviet relations that helped to galvanize the National Security Council against accommodation with Moscow. At a time when pessimism was widespread, after Soviet advances in Angola and Ethiopia, and with leftist Third World majorities dominating the United Nations, Huntington created a battalion of task forces to evaluate where the Soviets and the Americans stood with regard to weapons production, intelligence gathering, economics, diplomacy, and other areas. He and his team concluded that the Soviet advantage was temporary, and that the West would eventually move out ahead. They strongly recommended that the United States commence a military buildup and create a Persian Gulf rapid-reaction force. The last two years of Carter's presidency and the eight years of Ronald Reagan's presidency would see those recommendations become reality.

Only in 1981 did Huntington get around to publishing a book about the 1960s, *American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony*. Most generations in history have been organizational ones, preferring to motor along in their daily grooves, directed by others. Why, Huntington asked, are some generations different? His answer was that the 1960s constituted a "creedal passion period," something that erupts every few generations in Anglo-Saxon culture, and has its roots in England's seventeenth-century Civil War; the New World experienced something similar in the Protestant Great Awakening of the 1740s. Despite all the drugs and sex, Huntington viewed the 1960s demonstrators

as essentially Puritans, upset that our institutions were not living up to our ideals. It is the very promise of those ideals—which cannot possibly be fulfilled in any age—that accounts for the "central agony" in American politics.

Like America in the 1950s and 1960s, early-seventeenth-century England was in the throes of rapid economic development and social change—even as the peers and the gentry became frustrated with an increasingly impersonal government. The result was a Puritan uprising against the Crown in the hopes of erecting a morality-based society. It culminated in the conservative Restoration. The Great Awakening, a century later, was another Puritan revival, as American evangelicals, imbued with pioneer optimism and impatient with the status quo, fanned out over New England in a contest for souls.

The Great Awakening, Huntington wrote, "bequeathed to the American people the belief that they were engaged in a righteous effort to insure the triumph of good over evil"—which resulted in what Huntington and others called the American Creed. The creed became the touchstone of our national identity, because for the first few decades of our country's history there was little else to separate us from our English cousins. Allegiance to the creed would allow one generation of immigrants after another to Americanize rapidly while retaining elements of their ethnic cultures. Unlike other national creeds, ours is universalistic, democratic, egalitarian, and individualistic. The Jacksonian age of the 1820s and 1830s was a creedal-passion period, and so were the Populist-Progressive years at the turn of the twentieth century.

"Opposition to power, and suspicion of government as the most dangerous embodiment of power, are the central themes of American political thought," Huntington wrote. And it is true: just look at our extremist groups. Whereas both the right and the left in Europe have traditionally favored a strong state, both right-wing and left-wing radicals in America have always demanded more "popular control." Indeed, the very institutions required to deal with foreign enemies were excoriated by the 1960s militants. "The arrogance of power was superseded by the arrogance of morality," Huntington wrote. The Old Left was identified with the working class and the labor unions, but the New Left "eschewed the working class and stressed moralism rather than ideology." The New Left, explained a leader of the Students for a Democratic Society whom Huntington quoted, "begins from moral values, which are held as absolute"—Puritanism in its most unadulterated form.

The aftermath of creedal passion is cynical indifference followed by the return of conservatism; creedal passion holds government and society to standards that they simply cannot meet. Nevertheless, Huntington believes, creedal passion is at the core of America's greatness. By holding officials and institutions to impossible standards in a way no other country does, the United States has periodically

reinvented itself through evolution rather than revolution. What will the next creedal-passion period be about? "Power is now seen as corporate. So the next outburst of creedal passion may be against hegemonic corporate capitalism."

VII.

The early 1990s were a time of optimism and even triumphalism in the West. The Cold War had just been won. Neoconservatives assumed that democratic elections and the unleashing of market forces would improve life everywhere. Liberals assumed that power politics and huge defense budgets were relics of the past. News stories heralded the growing clout and effectiveness of the United Nations. A new transnational elite was emerging, composed of prominent academics and business leaders who believed that the world was on the verge of creating a truly global culture.

Then Samuel Huntington published an article titled "The Clash of Civilizations?" The article, which appeared in *Foreign Affairs* in 1993, was partly conceived in one of Huntington's seminars, where the paradigm of a world unified by globalization was challenged in classroom discussion. There was little evidence that any sort of universal civilization existed outside the confines of a small, highly educated elite. The fact that the United States and China, for example, could communicate with each other more easily did not mean that they

were any more likely to agree with each other. Indeed, the global media spotlight in places like the West Bank and Northern Ireland often magnified misunderstandings. Considering the contrarian nature of Huntington's previous ideas—corruption can sometimes be good; the difference between democracy and dictatorship is less than we think; the sixties radicals were puritanical—"The Clash of Civilizations?" should not have caused much of a stir. In light of subsequent events Huntington's thesis may even seem unremarkable—the ironic fate of true prescience.

It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations ... Conflict between civilizations will be the latest phase of the evolution of conflict in the modern world.

But these words did indeed stir passions. An angry response was instantaneous. So was the sheer interest in what Huntington had to say. "The Clash of Civilizations?"

was translated into twenty-six languages; scholarly conferences were organized around the world to debate the article. "Unlike Sam's previous works," Brzezinski told me, "the title of this one said it all. So people reacted to a captivating title without reading the interesting nuances in the text itself." Huntington's statement that beyond the universities, luxury hotels, and spanking new suburbs the world was being coarsened with new social and cultural tensions—feeding new political conflicts—was immensely threatening to an elite whose cosmopolitan lifestyle was insulated from the realities that Huntington was describing. For elites in the Third World especially, to acknowledge the truth of Huntington's points would have been to acknowledge the fragility of their own status in their respective societies.

Huntington did not merely say that parts of the world were anarchic, and that catastrophe loomed in Africa and Asia; many analysts were willing to admit that, even if they refused to accord it the proper significance. He also said that the demise of communism in no way meant the demise of the atavistic territorial battles that had been the stuff of power politics since time immemorial. The liberal project to unite the world through universal values was destined

to be stillborn. For those who thought that the end of the Cold War meant a less dangerous world, this sort of thinking was an insult. Many of the criticisms of "The Clash" amounted to mere value judgments—"morally dangerous," "a self-fulfilling prophecy"—

rather than substantive disputation.

But there was an attack on grounds of substance, too. The central charge: Huntington was being simplistic. The Islamic world, for example, wasn't uniform. Individual Muslim states often fought or denounced one another. Huntington answered his critics in a second *Foreign Affairs* article, later in 1993, maintaining that simplicity was the very point: "When people think seriously, they think abstractly; they conjure up simplified pictures of reality called concepts, theories, models, paradigms. Without such intellectual constructs, there is, William James said, only 'a bloomin' buzzin' confusion.'" The paradigm of the Cold War, Huntington pointed out, did not account for many of the conflicts and other developments from 1945 to 1989; nevertheless, it summed up reality better than other paradigms did. In an age when so many academics and intellectuals, fearful of attacks from other academics and intellectuals, prefer the safety of mutually canceling subtleties, Huntington was asserting—and defending—the scholar's duty to say what he actually thinks in stark and general terms.

In the book that emerged from his article, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996),

Huntington offered a wealth of other insights. He showed that whereas the West has generated ideologies, the East has generated religions—and explained that religion is now the more menacing force on the international scene. He pointed out, counterintuitively, that because communism was a Central European ideology, the Soviet Union was philosophically closer to the West than is the Eastern Orthodox Russia that has succeeded it. He reminded us that the Cold War was a fleeting event compared with the age-old struggle between the West and Islam. In the Middle Ages, Muslim armies advanced through Iberia as far as France, and through the Balkans as far as the gates of Vienna. A similar process of advance, demographically rather than militarily, is now under way in Europe. “The dangerous clashes of the future,” Huntington wrote, “are likely to arise from the interaction of Western arrogance, Islamic intolerance, and Sinic [Chinese] assertiveness.”

In the years since his article and book were published, NATO has expanded into three Protestant-Catholic countries while leaving out several Eastern Orthodox countries, so that the map of NATO, with some exceptions, resembles that of medieval Western Christendom. Meanwhile, Christians continue to flee the Middle East as the specter of Islamic oppression rises in Lebanon, Syria, and the Palestinian territories. American church groups, liberal and conservative alike, have united to support Christians fighting for human rights in China, and against Muslims slaughtering Christians in Sudan. Huntington’s ability to account for these and so many other phenomena within a general theory points up the lasting importance of his work. Meanwhile, where are the Kremlinologists who during the Cold War told us that the Soviet system was basically stable; or the Africanists who in the 1960s and 1970s predicted growth and development in places that have since been torn apart by war?

How do Huntington’s ideas apply to the current crisis stemming from the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington? He speaks with reluctance about specific policies the United States ought to pursue. Huntington has warned in the past that it is pointless to expect people who are not at all like us to become significantly more like us; this well-meaning instinct only causes harm. “In the emerging world of ethnic conflict and civilizational clash, Western belief in the universality of Western culture suffers three problems: it is false, it is immoral, and it is dangerous.” In the incipient war being led by the United States, the utmost caution is required to keep the focus on the brute fact of terrorism. He observes that Osama bin Laden, for his part, clearly hopes to incite civilizational conflict between Islam and the West. The United States must prevent this from happening, chiefly by assembling a coalition against terrorism that crosses civilizational lines. Beyond that, the United States must take this opportunity to accomplish two things: first, to draw the nations of the West more tightly together; and second, to try to understand more realistically how the

world looks through the eyes of other people. This is a time for a kind of tough-minded humility in our objectives and for an implacable but measured approach in our methods.

And he adds this coda, about the world in which we live: “It is a dangerous place, in which large numbers of people resent our wealth, power, and culture, and vigorously oppose our efforts to persuade or coerce them to accept our values of human rights, democracy, and capitalism. In this world America must learn to distinguish among our true friends who will be with us and we with them through thick and thin; opportunistic allies with whom we have some but not all interests in common; strategic partner-competitors with whom we have a mixed relationship; antagonists who are rivals but with whom negotiation is possible; and unrelenting enemies who will try to destroy us unless we destroy them first.”

VIII.

Huntington has never confused good intentions with clarity of analysis. He knows that the job of a political scientist is not necessarily to improve the world but to say what he thinks is going on in it—and then to prescribe a course of action that serves the interests of his government. In an article for *Foreign Affairs* in 1997, “The Erosion of American National Interests,” he wrote, “At some point in the future, the combination of security threat and moral challenge will require Americans once again to commit major resources to the defense of national interests.” Such a renewed mobilization, he continued, is easier to accomplish when it proceeds from “a low base” than when it is redirected from entrenched foreign-policy enterprises that are less vital to our security. Thus a restrained approach to the world might allow us in case of emergency to mobilize more quickly than if we were involved too deeply in too many places, in the service of either “particularistic” lobbies or some grand conception of human rights or how to organize the world.

Real conservatism cannot aspire to lofty principles, because its task is to defend what already exists. The conservative dilemma is that conservatism’s legitimacy can come only from being proved right by events, whereas liberals, whenever they are proved wrong, have universal principles to fall back on. Samuel Huntington has always held liberal ideals. But he knows that such ideals cannot survive without power, and that power requires careful upkeep.

If American political science leaves any lasting intellectual monument, the work of Samuel Huntington will be one of its pillars. A passage in the conclusion of *American Politics* has always seemed to me to capture the essence of Huntington’s enduring judgment and political sensibility: “Critics say that America is a lie because its reality falls so far short of its ideals. They are wrong. America is not a lie; it is a disappointment. But it can be a disappointment only because it is also a hope.” ▀



JAY STEVENS

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS *Astronaut Laundry*

It sounds like a riddle: How do astronauts do their laundry in outer space? The answer: They don't. There's no room up at the International Space Station for a washer-dryer set, and even if there were, using such appliances in an environment of weightlessness would be difficult, to say the least. Sadly, though, zero gravity does not mean zero dirt, and one can easily imagine that without clean clothes, things might get pretty gamy up there at a certain point. So the astronauts and cosmonauts who staff the ISS do what many of us do: they send their laundry out.

In their case, "out" means way, way out—hundreds of miles, to Earth's surface, where it can be washed the old-fashioned way. Since old-fashioned pickup and delivery are out of the question, though, this task is accomplished by the Space Shuttle, which on a few trips a year to the ISS carries a multi-purpose logistics module (MPLM) full of supplies (food, toiletries, clean clothes) and then returns with a payload of dirty laundry and other things that aren't wanted—or, more likely, can't be kept (not much closet

space in the ISS either). "When you have humans living in space," says Sharon Castle, an ISS launch-package manager at NASA, "you have to look out for their needs—not only their glamorous needs but their necessary needs as well."

After one recent mission the shuttle *Endeavour's* MPLM, "Leonardo," came back carrying 2,500 pounds of stuff—reusable food containers, hardware, space-suit components, IMAX film equipment, and a Russian air-conditioner that wasn't working properly, along with 400 pounds of clothing. Although this kind of payload is occasionally characterized by civilians as "space trash," Castle is careful to point out that everything that comes back to Earth in an MPLM is recycled and reused, one way or another. "Things that we no longer have a need for—that are really garbage—go in the 'Progress,'" she explains. The "Progress" is an unmanned cargo vehicle attached to the ISS—a space Dumpster, if you will, which is cut loose when full and ultimately burns up in Earth's atmosphere. Perhaps you spotted it one night and made a wish. —RICHARD RUBIN

PARADISO XXXIII *by Dante Alighieri*

TRANSLATED BY W. S. MERWIN

.....

"Virgin mother, daughter of your son,
more lowly and more exalted than any creature,
the eternal counsel's fixed conclusion,

you are the one who so ennobled
human nature that the maker of it
condescended to be made of it.

In your womb the love was lit again
from whose warmth, in the eternal peace
this flower has been brought, thus, to open.

You are for us here the noonday torch
of charity, and there below, among
mortals, you are hope, its living spring.

You, lady, are so great and so availing
that whoever wants grace without turning
to you for it hopes to fly without a wing.

Your benevolence not only helps the one
who asks, but often it will run
freely to be ahead of the petition.

In you is mercy, in you is pity,
in you is bounty, in you, brought together,
all the good there is in any creature.

Now this one who, from the lowest hole
of the universe to here, has seen
the lives of the spirits one by one,

begs you, of your grace, for the power that will
allow him to lift his eyes up even
higher, turning toward the last salvation.

And I, who never burned for my own vision
more than I do for his, raise toward you all
my prayers, and pray they may not be too little,

for you, with your own prayers, to set him free
from every cloud of his mortality
and so disclose the supreme joy to him.

To you who can do all that you will, queen,
I pray, furthermore, that you will keep sound
his affections after all he has seen.

May your guard overcome human urges;
behold, with Beatrice, how many saints
for my prayers join toward you their hands."

The eyes that God delights in and reveres,
fixed upon the one who had made the prayer,
showed how dear devout prayers are to her.

Then they turned toward the eternal light
into which we must not believe the eye
of any creature can pass as clearly.

And I, who was coming close to the end
of all desires, within myself refined
appropriately the fire of my longing.

Bernard, with a smile, made me a sign
to look upward, but I was already,
of myself, as he wanted me to be,

for my vision entered, as it grew
pure, deeper and deeper into the beam
of the high light which of itself is true.

After that, what I saw was greater than
speech can portray, for at such a vision
it fails, and at that extreme, memory fails.

As one who sees when he is dreaming, and
after the dream the imprint of the passion
stays, and the rest does not come back to mind,

so am I, for almost all of my
vision has vanished, and still the sweetness born
from it is distilled in my heart to me.

Thus in the sun the snow loses its seal;
thus in the wind whatever oracle
the sibyl left on the light leaves is lost.

O highest light, lifted so far above
mortal conception, lend my mind again
a little of the way you appeared then

and to my tongue grant the ability
to leave to the people of the future
only one single spark of your glory,

for by returning to my memory
somewhat, and sounding in these lines a little,
more will be understood of your victory.

I believe that so piercing was the ray
which I endured that I would have been lost
if from it I had turned my eyes away.

And I remember that for that reason
I sustained it more boldly, until my vision
and the infinite goodness became one.

O grace abounding, that brought me to dare
direct my gaze through the eternal light
until I poured into it all my sight!

In its depths I saw that it contained,
by love into a single volume bound,
the scattered pages of the universe;

substances, accidents, and their relations
in such a way seemed to be mingled that
what I say is a simple glimmer of it.

I believe I saw the universal
form of this knot because I can feel
my joy expanding as I tell of it.

One moment brings me more oblivion
than five and twenty centuries brought upon
Neptune's wonder at the Argo's shadow.

So my mind, wholly caught up, went on
gazing with a fixed and motionless attention,
by its own gaze constantly kept burning.

One becomes such, in that light, that it would be
impossible ever to turn away
willingly to see anything else,

for the good, which is the object of the will,
is all there in it and what within it
is perfect is defective outside it.

From here on my tongue will fall even shorter,
with regard to what I can remember,
than an infant's still bathing at the breast.

Not because more than one simple aspect
was in the living light into which I gazed,
which is the same always as it was,

but through my sight which, as it gazed, was growing
stronger, one single appearance was taking
shape before me while I myself was changing.

Inside the deep and clear subsistence
of the exalted light three circles of three
colors and one magnitude appeared to me;

and the one seemed reflected in the other
as a rainbow in a rainbow, and the third seemed
fire breathed equally from one and the other.

Oh, how short speech falls, and how feeble
for my conception which, after what I saw,
cannot even be described as "little."

O light eternal who in yourself alone
abide, and alone know yourself and, known
to yourself, love and smile on yourself!

That circling which, conceived thus, came to be
seen in you as reflected light, when my
eyes studied it for a time, seemed to me,

within itself and in its own color,
to be painted with our own likeness
so that my sight was held completely there.

As the geometer who concentrates
on measuring the circle and cannot
find the needed principle in his thought,

so was I, at what I had just seen:
I wished to see how the image fitted
in the circle and what place it occupied,

but my wings had not been made for there,
although there was one flash that struck my mind,
bringing to it what it was wishing for.

Here power failed the high fantasy,
but my desire and will were turned already,
like a wheel that is moved evenly,

by the love which moves the sun and the other stars.

MOONRISE

A mother writes about her teenage son, afflicted with muscular dystrophy, and the life he leads, and the one he can look forward to

BY PENNY WOLFSON

Photographs by Burton Pritzker

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At the Center for Creative Photography, in Tucson, Arizona, my husband, Joe, and I are looking at prints of *Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico*, by Ansel Adams. A slender young man in a suit has brought us, as requested, three versions of this famous photograph. He dons a pair of white gloves before removing the 14½" x 18½" enlargements from their Plexiglas sheaths, opens the hinged glass viewing case in front of us, and places the photographs carefully, lovingly, on a slanted white board inside. He stands there while we examine the pictures; when we are finished, he will repeat the process in reverse.

I don't know exactly where Hernandez, New Mexico, is, but it reminds me a bit of Sacaton, ninety miles northwest of here, the Pima Indian village where Joe is a government doctor and where we have lived since July of 1983. Now it's December. We have made the trip to Tucson expressly to view the Ansel Adams photos, though we did not imagine that there would be so many prints from the same negative.

In *Moonrise* two thirds of the space is usurped by a rich black sky; a gibbous moon floats like a hot-air balloon in an otherworldly—and yet absolutely southwestern—landscape. A gauzy strip of low clouds or filtered light drifts along the horizon; distant mountains are lit by waning sun or rising moon. Only in the bottom third of the photo, among scrubby earth and sparsely scattered trees, does human settlement appear: a small collection of modest adobe houses and one larger adobe church. Around the edge of the village white crosses rise from the ground at many angles; at first glance they resemble clotheslines strung with sheets or socks, but on more-careful examination it is obvious that they mark graves.

The prints differ greatly in quality from the reproductions one usually sees, and also differ slightly from one another: here we see a more defined darkness, burnt in by the photographer; there a variation in exposure, a grainier texture. But that does not change the essential meaning of the photograph, a meaning one never forgets in the South-

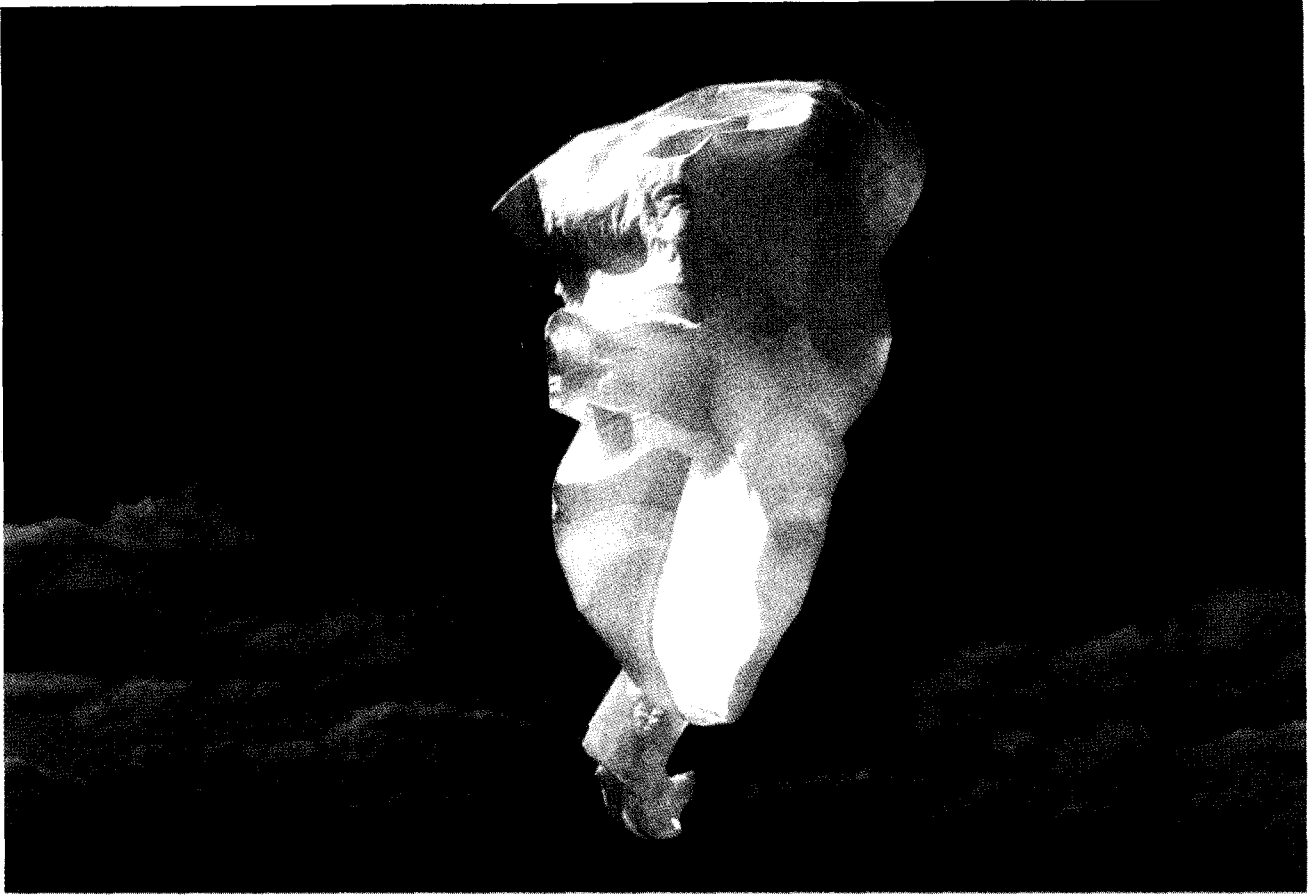
west: Nature dominates. Human life is small, fragile, and finite. And yet, still, beautiful.

I. FALLING, 1998

I am at the Grand Union in Dobbs Ferry, New York, with my son Ansel, who is thirteen years old. It's raining. He begged to come, so I brought him, not really wanting to, because I had to bring his wheelchair, too: it weighs more than 200 pounds and isn't easy to maneuver into the minivan, even with the ramp. I have to wrestle the motorized chair until it faces forward and then, bending and squeezing into the narrow confines of the van, I have to fasten it to the floor with several clasps. By the time I have done this even once, I'm irritable. A trip to the supermarket means doing it twice and undoing it twice.

Anyway, we've finished our shopping, and we leave the supermarket. Ansel is in his chair, without his hooded yellow raincoat from L. L. Bean, because he has decided that at his age a raincoat is babyish, not cool. He's afraid people at school will laugh at him. Maybe this is true, I say, but I think it's stupid. Why get wet when you can stay dry? Needless to say, I lose this argument.

Before loading the groceries I open the van door so that Ansel can get in the front seat, where he always sits if Joe isn't with us. He parks his chair at a distance from the minivan, so that I'll have room for the ramp, and starts to rise, laboriously. No, "rise" sounds too easy, like smoke going up a flue, airy, like yeast bread rising in the oven. Ansel does not rise. He shifts sideways in the seat and pulls himself up heavily, propping his eighty pounds against the armrest for balance. He leans with his left arm, twists his right shoulder around to straighten up, and brings his hip and buttocks to a partly standing position. Actually he's sort of bent in half, with his hands still on the chair's joystick. There is a moment of imbalance. His feet are planted far apart, farther out than his hips, and he needs to bounce back and forth a few times to bring his feet together. Finally



he's up. He begins walking toward the door in his waddling, tiptoe way. His spine is curved quite a bit from scoliosis, his stomach is forward, his hands are out at his sides chest-high, his fingers outstretched.

His balance is so tenuous that his five-year-old brother, Toby, can knock him down. Sometimes Ansel will bellow, "I'm tired of everyone always leaving things all over the floor! Don't they know I'll fall?" It's true that we're a little careless about this. But Ansel will trip over anything—an unevenness in the sidewalk, the dog's water dish, some bits of food on the floor, things expected and unexpected—and sometimes over nothing. Sooner or later he falls. It's part of the routine. And the older he gets, the more he falls.

Now, in the Grand Union parking lot, he falls. Who knows why—it could be the wet ground. He's in the skinny aisle of asphalt between our car and the one parked next to us. He falls, and it's pouring, and I'm still loading grocery bags into the back.

"Mom!" he calls at me, half barking, half crying. "I fell!" There's such anguish, such anger, in his voice when he falls, and such resignation. He never thinks I hear him.

And why am I suddenly so angry? Such terrible impatience rises in me now. Am I really such a witch, such a bad mother, that when I'm loading groceries and my son falls, I don't have the time or patience to cope? Why am I so angry?

"Wait a minute," I say. "I'll be there in a minute."

So he sits on the wet pavement between the cars. I know

his sweatpants are at this moment soaking through. I can see that the wheelchair, waiting to be rolled up the ramp, needing to be pushed and yanked into position, is also getting wet. Its foamy-nylon seat will need drying out later.

A middle-aged blonde woman has wheeled her shopping cart into the lot and approaches us. "Can I help?"

No, you definitely cannot help, runs through my head. This is both true and self-righteous. Physically, the job is not meant for two; it's easier for me to do on my own. How would we two, and Ansel, even fit between the cars?

I grit my teeth and smile and say, "No, no thanks, really. I can do it." People always seem puzzled and upset when they see him fall. It's so sudden, an instant crumpling, without warning. They can't see the weakness, the steady deterioration of his pelvis. Maybe someone would fall this way if he'd been hit hard in the solar plexus; I don't know. But Ansel's feet give way for no apparent reason, and he's down.

The blonde woman has heard me, but she keeps standing there, her hands clamped around the handle of her cart, her eyes moving from Ansel to the grocery bags to me. I know she means to be helpful, and in a way I do want something from her—pity? an acknowledgment that I am more noble than she? But mostly I want her to go away. *Don't look at me. Don't watch this.*

"Mom! Where are you?"

I turn from the blonde woman; she fades away. "Okay, I'm coming," I say. I try to wedge myself between the cars so

that I can retrieve Ansel. There's a special way to pick him up: you have to come from behind and grab him under the arms, raise him so that his toes dangle just above the ground, and then set his feet down precisely the right distance apart.

I'm in pretty good shape, but Ansel is dead weight. Another child could help you, could put his hands around your neck. His feet would come off the ground at even the suggestion of lifting. But Ansel is pulling me down, his limp shoulders, his heavy leg braces, his sodden pants, his clumsy sneakers. I can't hold him. My own sneakers slip on the wet pavement.

II. CHAOS, 1999

The New York Academy of Medicine, on 103rd Street and Fifth Avenue, is not exactly in the slums, but it's not really the Upper East Side either. On a dreary, drizzly morning I park at the Metropolitan Museum garage, on Eightieth Street, and walk up Madison, past Banana Republic and Ann Taylor and patisseries and fancy meat purveyors and little French children's-clothing shops that display sashed dresses with hand-embroidered yokes in their windows. But above Ninety-sixth Street, near the Mount Sinai Hospital complex, the scenery and the people change abruptly; everything's older and more run-down. Street peddlers hawk books, batteries, Yankees caps, cheap scarves, acrylic ski caps, five-dollar handbags. I see an obese black man leaning on a cane, harried-looking workers with Mount Sinai badges, a woman exiting a hospital building through a revolving door carrying crutches.

Eleven years ago, when Ansel was three, doctors diagnosed in him a form of muscular dystrophy called Duchenne, which rapidly destroys muscle tissue, confining its victims to wheelchairs by adolescence and invariably resulting in early death. Like hemophilia, it is almost always transmitted to sons from asymptomatic "carrier" mothers. In my extended family, which produced an overwhelming number of daughters and almost no sons for two generations, the existence of the Duchenne gene—or, more correctly, the existence of an altered gene that doesn't properly code for a particular muscle protein—was unknown, a subterranean truth. My mother and sister and I, all carriers without outward signs, never guessed at this defect in our genetic heritage.

Joe and I gave our son, conceived and born in Arizona, the name of the great photographer we admired, Ansel Adams, who had died earlier that year. The name seemed apt; Ansel was, as people often told us, prettier than a picture, amber-haired and round-eyed, with a perpetually quizzical but serene countenance and the build of a slender but sturdy miniature football player. For two years he developed normally, reaching all the benchmarks on or close to schedule. He was an engaging and beautiful boy, gifted, one suspected, in some intangible way. When his teacher in nursery school began to point out Ansel's deficits in language and in gross

motor skills (he couldn't master rudimentary grammar, couldn't alternate legs on the stairs), we refused to see any problem. It was impossible for us to believe that this perfectly wonderful child, our child, was not perfect at all, that he was in fact handicapped and would become progressively more handicapped.

It took a year for us to accept his differentness, to have him professionally evaluated, to reach a diagnosis. And although we have been to dozens of doctors and have dealt with every aspect of his disease, it has taken me eleven years to get up the nerve to come here, to the Academy of Medicine, and look squarely at what will happen to Ansel in a future I have not yet completely faced.

The library reading room is large and quiet, with a high ceiling and a faded tapestry on the wall behind me. At a long oak table beneath a grand chandelier, surrounded by busts of famous scientists, all men, who peer down from atop the bookshelves, I sit nervously waiting for the books I've requested. It makes sense, I suppose, that Louis Pasteur sits head and shoulders above the lesser-knowns.

But not even Pasteur, I remind myself, could have cured muscular dystrophy. Nor could any of the nineteenth-century doctors who described the disease, including the English physicians Charles Bell, Edward Meryon, and William Cowers and the French neurologist G.B.A. Duchenne, after whom the most common form of muscular dystrophy is named. And despite hundreds, perhaps thousands, of studies completed and articles written and compiled in prestigious journals such as *Muscle and Nerve* and *The Lancet* and *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, sitting right here in the bound volumes surrounding me in this rarefied room, no one, even in this century, has found a way to save my son.

A young woman arrives with my books: a general text on Duchenne muscular dystrophy from 1993 by a British geneticist named Alan E. H. Emery, and two books by Duchenne himself, one from the 1870s and crumbling with age, called *A Treatise on Localized Electrization (De l'électrization Localisée)*, first published in 1855), and one translated in the 1950s, *Physiology of Motion*. But I find the writings of the great doctor inscrutable and bizarre, filled with stuff about electrical impulses and pictures of strange apparatus; Duchenne devised such instruments as the "dynamometer," or strength gauge, and the harpoon biopsy needle, which he used to study muscles in his patients at different stages in their short lives (before that, muscle tissue was mostly observed at autopsy). Duchenne's books have nearly no narrative; they consist mostly of pages and pages of minute drawings and observations of every muscle in the human body, with one- and two-page sections such as "Motions of the Thumb" and "Flexion of the Forearm." One forgets that before this century medicine was largely descriptive, and that one of the main questions about muscular dystrophy was whether it was primarily neurological—affecting the

spine and nerves—or truly muscular. Duchenne confirmed that the disease had no neurogenic basis. Nevertheless, there was something obsessive if not downright nutty about him—or maybe my impatient twentieth-century mother's mind fails to grasp the connections between his results and his writings.

But when I open Emery's book, *Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy*, everything else vanishes. I read between lines; I am transfixed, by turns elated and restless. For the first time in eleven years I look at pictures of boys in the advanced stages of the disease. There are obese boys and skeletal boys looking like Auschwitz victims, their spines twisted and their emaciated arms and legs dangling. There is a boy with grotesquely enlarged muscles throughout his body; he resembles a deformed child body-builder, a waxy muscle-bound doll, a strange, surprised balloon boy. In many cases no attempt has been made to conceal the identities of these boys; their faces are in clear view, and their misshapen bodies are naked, so one can see the deterioration clearly. There is something vulgar and vulnerable about the nakedness of these boys, their genitalia seeming in some instances particularly underdeveloped compared with the rest of their bodies and often too frankly exposed. At home I don't see my son naked, as I used to when he was little; I glimpse only the outward signs of deterioration—the thick-veined calves, the legs bruised by falls, the callused, deformed feet, the increasingly swayed back, the heels that can no longer reach the floor. I focus on his face: despite its fleshy roundness, caused by steroids, it is still beautiful to me, with its alert, quizzical eyes and arched eyebrows, its stubborn mouth (how easily it registers disgust or frustration or delight!), its straight, broad nose with a suggestion of freckles, its crown of chestnut hair.

I study an engraving from 1879 of a boy in three positions rising from the floor, in what doctors call a Gowers' maneuver, named after the physician. In the first scene the boy is on his hands and knees; in the second his rump is raised into the air and his two hands press on the ground for support; in the third he rests a hand on his thigh to balance himself. Here I experience the oddest feeling—a thrill of identification. Yes! There it is, exactly. My child. So true, so utterly Ansel. But obviously true of other boys, too, over hundreds or thousands of years. I feel less lonely, in a way, but I can't deny what's in the photographs. And there's no denying the statistics either: 90 percent of boys with Duchenne die by the age of twenty. At sixteen about half are dead. A nine-year-old we know who has Duchenne can no longer walk. Should I feel happy or sad knowing that Ansel is at the far end of the curve?

Some pages I barely glance at—I know the early symptoms, and I have already witnessed some of the decay in Ansel. I know that there is a “progressive weakness of movement, first affecting the lower limbs and then later the upper limbs” and “a gradual increase in the size of

many affected muscles.” I have seen that the “lumbar lordosis becomes more exaggerated and the waddling gait increases”; I see the shortening of the heel cords.

But as the disease progresses, Emery's book reminds me, the breakdown intensifies: “Muscle weakness becomes more profound, contractures develop, particularly ... of the elbows, knees, and hips ... movements of the shoulders and wrists also become limited. The talus bone [protrudes] prominently under the skin ...” Finally all hell breaks loose: “Thoracic deformity ... restricts adequate pulmonary airflow ... a severe kyphoscoliosis [curvature of the spine] develops ... a gradual deterioration begins in pulmonary function with reduced maximal inspiratory and expiratory pressures. By the later stages there is a significant reduction in total lung capacity.” In other words, the spine contorts, compressing the chest cavity; the respiratory and heart muscles weaken; and eventually the child can't breathe. Less commonly, the heart gives out.

In a chapter called “Management,” I review the paltry fixes: knee orthoses; braces that extend from ankle to groin; stretching exercises; steroids (the author, writing in 1993, downplayed their importance); wheelchairs; standing frames; rigid body jackets; the “Luque operation,” which involves inserting two rods in the spine; tenotomy, or cutting the Achilles and other tendons; finally, assisted ventilation and drainage of the lungs. Some sound radical, some gruesome; at any rate, they are only Band-Aids, short-term measures that extend life perhaps one year, perhaps two. Sooner or later, usually by their mid-twenties, all boys with Duchenne succumb. Of 144 patients Emery studied, only sixteen made it to their twenty-fifth birthdays.

Every night, hands in his pockets for balance, on tip-toe, his jaw set in a grimace, his feet hesitantly reaching and shuffling, leaning longer on the right than on the left, Ansel stumbles along the hallway between his bedroom and the living room, willing himself to walk. It is unheard of—a fifteen-year-old with Duchenne walking. “Amazing,” I tell him, “amazing,” as he collapses in his wheelchair. We know it can't last forever, but we keep our fingers crossed.

Sunday morning I wake up, descend the stairs, begin boiling water for coffee. From the stove I get a glimpse of the cabinets that Joe fixed the day before: two low storage cupboards whose doors had been yanked off by the harsh sweep of Ansel's wheelchair. For weeks the jumble of our kitchen had been exposed, its internal disorder revealed. On Saturday, Joe finally mended them, filling in the holes and jimmying the hardware. The doors hung a bit askew, leaving an empty space like a knocked-out front tooth. Still, for the moment they stayed in place.

But now I see that one door has come loose at its hinges again; it hangs perilously from a single screw. Inside the darkness, chaos.

III. MOONRISE, 2000

Ansel and I are on 165th Street in Washington Heights, on our way to the doctor at the Neurological Institute. I picked him up at school, and he told me he loves me, as he does at least once a day, and then we drove here and parked in the Kinney Lot, where, because of our “handicapped” placard, the attendants let us squeeze into a ground-level spot.

This is the neighborhood where Joe and I first lived together, in medical-school housing in one of the huge modern buildings making up The Towers, which overlook the George Washington Bridge. We did not particularly get along with our multiple roommates, and we did not always like each other, but it was our first home, and it holds memories: the “Man in the Pan” early-morning lectures at which the doctors-in-training studied dissected organs; the late Sunday nights when I searched for Joe and his friend Peter, who were studying for a Monday exam in the recesses of the vast Health Sciences Library; the white-coated world of the medical complex, with people waiting in line for treatment, and the marble floor of Columbia-Presbyterian Hospital, through which I walked when coming home from the subway. I had just read Malcolm X’s great book about his life, and I was always aware of our closeness to the Audubon Ballroom, where Malcolm was shot, and also of the darkness and danger of the 168th Street subway station, where several rapes and murders had taken place. My sister’s boyfriend, who worked in a microbiology lab at Presbyterian, had been stabbed in the heart on the train on his way to work. He recovered, because he was taken to the emergency room quickly, but he had a scary, knotty scar on his chest where the mugger’s knife had gone in.

There are sweet memories, too, mostly associated with food: the French toast at the Haven coffee shop, around the corner, and the farmer’s cheese from the old Daitch Dairy (a remnant of the aging Jewish community), and the old-fashioned luncheonette on Fort Washington, where a soda jerk whipped up chocolate malteds made with Breyer’s ice cream. The apartment in The Towers was where I held a successful surprise party for Joe; I managed to concoct Julia Child’s fanciest chocolate cake, le Marquis, without his ever noticing. It was also where I had to deliver the news to Joe that his adored stepfather had died suddenly, at forty-eight, of a heart attack.

We are supposed to see Dr. DeVivo at least once a year, but it has been a year and some months since our last visit. When Ansel and I arrive, we are told to sit in a secluded, empty waiting room, where he does his math homework and I glance at a magazine called *Healthy Kids*. Joe arrives—in a suit, because he is now the head of family practice at the Catholic Medical Centers, in Brooklyn and Queens—and a receptionist says that we are in the wrong waiting room. We go and sit for another twenty minutes in a much

more crowded room. A small boy in a stroller cries, seemingly overtired and cranky; his mother, in a foreign language, tries to soothe him. He has tiny white braces on his legs, but I can’t make out what his problem is. I never ask, “Why are you here?” although I always want to know. It sounds too much like “What are you in for?”

When DeVivo, a white-haired, stocky man, enters the room, I am not sure I recognize him, it’s been so long. But he is wearing a white coat, and he seems to be in charge, so we follow him into his large office at the end of the hallway. I am very conscious that on our last visit Ansel walked from the waiting room to the office, and I remember the look of surprise on the doctor’s face: How amazing that a fourteen-year-old with Duchenne could still walk! Now Ansel wheels his way down the long corridor, and I am the one surprised that he could have walked so far so recently.

Joe, Ansel, and I sit in three upholstered chairs facing DeVivo, who sits behind a massive desk. I remember suddenly how poorly Joe did in his neurology rotation in medical school; how he didn’t like the neurologists—they were too cerebral and academic, he felt. DeVivo’s manner is restrained, and when he speaks, he addresses Ansel first. He asks Ansel about school, about his clarinet lessons (the doctor plays trombone), and gets only a typical teenager’s grunts. The pleasantries aside, he gets to what’s important: “Tell me, Ansel, how do you feel, physically, compared with the last time I saw you?”

“Well, I use the wheelchair more,” Ansel says. “I get out of the wheelchair three or four times a day and stretch, and then I walk a few steps. That’s all. I can’t really walk more than that.”

He doesn’t say it sadly, just as fact; but Joe and I and the doctor know it is sad, and it sits heavy in the air, a presence among us. I think of Ansel at five, walking into town with me because he suddenly wanted to bake cookies and we had to buy cookie cutters. He walked slowly, but he walked all the way, a quarter of a mile in each direction.

For a moment no one else can speak. There isn’t anything to say, is there? He gets worse. He will die. Even if it’s slow, it will happen. It’s a whole life, not a half-life, divided infinitely. Sooner or later it will not be there.

But in one way it’s not sad. Ansel has spoken, after all, and we have all listened. He is no longer a small child but the voice of authority. Who can know the answers but Ansel? He has a deep voice and a little trace of a moustache on his upper lip. He and the neurologist discuss the best course of therapy, his medications (would Ansel agree to take three enzyme capsules a day, rather than the one he has been taking?), and his adherence to a low-salt, low-fat diet.

Joe, DeVivo, and Ansel retreat to the examining room that adjoins the office, where the table, made for small children, is too high for Ansel to mount. I stay behind, aware that he will not want his mother present when the doctor prods



private parts or asks personal questions. I also don't want to see the fat that spills over the elastic of his underpants or the angry calluses on his feet when he removes his splints and shoes and socks. I'd rather look at the stack of magazines on luxury-home renovation, at the wall of books at the back of the room, at the color photos of racing sailboats—this must be one of the doctor's hobbies. I look out the dirty window of the Neurological Institute, half a block away from our old apartment at The Towers. It is strange to be here, looking out at a past that contained not even a flicker of Ansel. Why is it unthinkable to look at a future without him?

Joe and I are on the street on a Sunday afternoon, late. The forsythia is in bloom; there is yellow everywhere, and a dark sky with just a strip of light over the Palisades. Joe wants to know what I am writing: it is about Ansel's growing up and deteriorating all at once, the "unnaturalness" of a child's beginning to die just when he is beginning to flower.

Joe rejects this, furious. "What are you saying—because it's not average, not the norm, it's unnatural? That's like saying homosexuality is unnatural." I see his eyes flash behind his glasses. "What's unnatural about it?" he says. "It is in fact the natural order of things, that mutations occur. That's who we are, who we have to be, as humans."

"So you have no feelings about Ansel's getting worse?" I demand tearfully.

He purses his lips angrily, forcing air through them. "Of course I have feelings about it. But why is it necessarily sadder for someone to die young than old? Is it sadder for Ansel to die than a ninety-year-old man who's never done anything, who has nothing to show for his life? Anyway, Ansel's not dead. I can't mourn for him. And I refuse to see my life as a tragedy!"

"Well, that's what I'm writing about," I say. "And I'm sorry if you don't think it's sad!" Then I can't speak for ten minutes. I stride along next to Joe, up the hill beside the Food Emporium, and I don't look at him. I am too stubborn and angry. How can he say that a dying child is not heartrending? How about that boy Zachy, the only child of one of Joe's colleagues, who died at eight or nine of a brain tumor? Wasn't that worse, more tragic, than, say, my father's death at seventy-three? Wasn't my father's life, in concrete and substantial ways, long *enough*, whereas Zachy's was not?

At the top of the hill, thinking back on Zachy's death and its aftermath—his stunned parents sitting shiva in the apartment; the boy's baseball-card collection still visible in his bedroom—I can no longer hold on to my anger at Joe. I see him simply as a fellow sufferer: trying to construct meaning from ill fate, to find solace in the destruction of his first-born. He is just groping for a spiritual handhold. This is Joe, used to such loss (two fathers and a mother, all young, all loved), soothing himself, explaining to himself, as a child might, why death comes. And this is just the other half of me.

In six months Ansel will be old enough to drive. In September he will be sixteen, able in New York State to take that step toward adulthood—obtaining a learner's permit. Even though we don't have the details yet, even though his father is not convinced that he can physically operate a motor vehicle, Ansel and I talk about driving as a reality—how he will take over the wheelchair van and I will buy a tiny red Miata, the car of my dreams. He is not as crazy about cars as some teenage boys are, but one day when he and I see a cab-yellow sixties Camaro idling at the corner of Cedar Street and Broadway in the town where we live, his left eyebrow lifts, he peers at me sideways, and he says, "Wow." He's ready.

In the books on muscular dystrophy one learns that there are three markers: the onset of disease, confinement to a wheelchair, death. Ansel is approaching the date of confinement. He will be there, I am sure, by his sixteenth birthday.

I have panic attacks nearly every night. Awakened by some minor provocation—for instance, my daughter, Diana, enters the room to check the time—I turn over, sit up, and quite suddenly experience dread; there is no other word. I

blink my eyes, because I am sure I'm going blind, and scratch my middle fingertip with my thumbnail, to assure myself that I'm not paralyzed. I try to take the pulse in my wrist, but I'm too scared and can't count right. I am outside my body, physically detached, at the end of a long passage-way, drowning—all those melodramatic scenarios of what it's like to die.

Seven years ago, when I was in labor with Toby, a nurse injected me with Stadol, a painkiller, and I became distant and paranoid like this. I held on to Joe's hand, literally for dear life. "Tell me I am not dying," I said over and over, to hear my own voice and to hear him respond. *What an irony*, I thought then, *to die giving birth!*

Now my heart seems to be racing in my head, but my blood is glacial, cold and slow. I have finally gone over the edge! The fear feeds on itself. I get dressed so that I can be ready to drive to the emergency room, if need be.

Sitting on the edge of the bed, sure of my own doom, I wonder suddenly, *Am I trying to experience my own death in place of Ansel's? Am I the sacrifice?*

It is the middle of March, and every moment pulls me two ways. In a community church in White Plains, New York, that looks like a cross between a pagoda and an airline terminal, I sit with Joe, Diana, and Toby in a fan-shaped room filled with folding chairs. It is a kind of backward room, because one enters by way of the stage and descends to the seats. Ansel, who will be performing with an ensemble

BLACK CAMELLIA

after Petrarch

Little room, with four and a half tatami mats
and sliding paper doors, that used to be
a white, translucent place to live in refined poverty,
what are you now but scalding water in a bath?
Little mattress, that used to fold around me
at sunrise as unfinished dreams were fading,
what are you now but a blood-red palanquin
of plucked feathers and silk airing in the sun?
Weeding the garden, paring a turnip, drinking tea
for want of wine, I flee from my secret love
and from my mind's worm—This is a poem.
Is this a table? No, this is a poem. Am I a girl?—
seeking out the meat-hook crowd I once loathed,
so afraid am I of finding myself alone.

—HENRI COLE

from his music school, can wheel onto the stage but not into the audience, so after he plays, Joe will have to carry him down the steps.

When the woodwinds come onstage and are seated, Ansel seems taller than the others, though he's actually quite short, because for the first time he is playing from his wheelchair. Usually he transfers, with difficulty, to a regular chair, but it was thought that the amount of time before the next group came on was too brief to allow for that. I can see Ansel now and then between the arms of the conductor. He is puffing out his big cheeks, like Dizzy Gillespie on the horn. He loves the clarinet, the instrument he chose when he began music lessons at school, in the fifth grade. Joe was against it. "What's the point," he asked, "when all boys with muscular dystrophy develop breathing difficulties? He won't be able to play for more than a couple of years; it will just be frustrating." As he does with nearly everything, Ansel stood firm, and got his way, and it is good that he did. Clarinet playing is his breathing therapy as well as his joy, and it may be the reason his lungs show no deterioration yet.

He progressed slowly when he took lessons at the public school, but as soon as he began at the music school, he flourished. Under the guidance of a gifted teacher Ansel has become a disciplined music student who, after many days and nights of mistakes, false starts, and practice, practice, can be depended on to produce a fine sound. When he leaves his bedroom door open, I enjoy the lovely strains of the Weber clarinet concertino or of a Hindemith sonata. He is not a virtuoso; he is more of a plodder, but he plods well. He has learned to respect the difficulty of the task and the beauty of the result.

Sitting at the concert, I feel the pleasure of his playing, but seeing him in the wheelchair, I cannot shake the feeling of loss, a loss that feels sharpest when I love him most. I know that when boys become confined to their wheelchairs, their chests and lungs become constricted. Wind is the first thing to go. *Who knows which way the wind blows? Who knows where my love goes, how my love grows, where the time goes?* Despite my best efforts, despite my pride in Ansel (that serious, stubborn, laboring face!), a tear wells up in the corner of my eye. I shift my glasses so that Diana will not see. She does anyway.

"Mom, why are you crying?" she asks. I shake my head. "Ansel?" she whispers urgently. I nod, and wordlessly I put my arm around her shoulder—her bare, cool, pubescent shoulder, upon which I perhaps place too great a burden—and hold her close to me. Later Ansel sits with me, and Diana sits alone all the way in back. Joe has pulled Toby out, because he is complaining so much about being at a concert. The Festival Orchestra, sounding very professional despite being jerkily led by a very thin, very young conductor, plays Bach. In the midst of the quite proper, cultivated audience, Ansel and I dip and bounce our heads and shoulders to the

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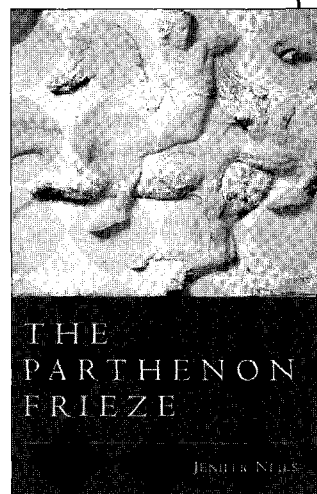
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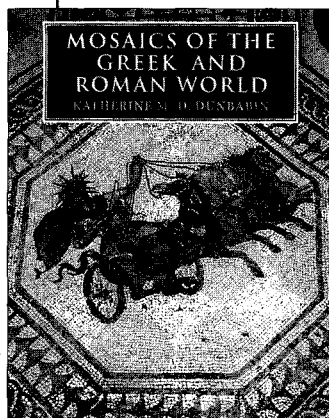
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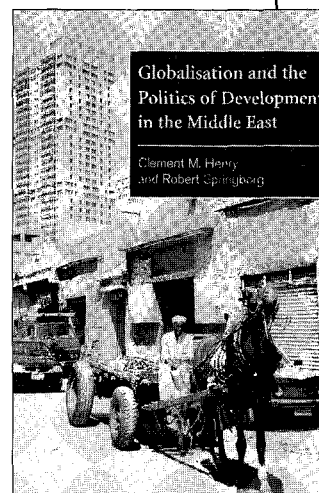


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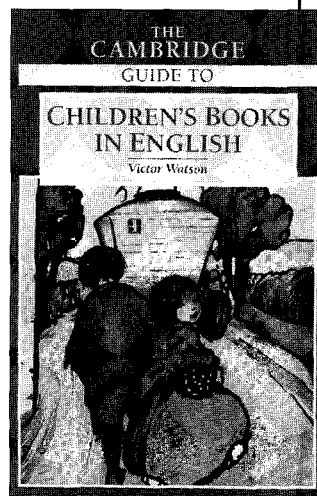
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rhythms. Near the end Ansel whispers, "Have you noticed everybody else here is completely still, no one else but you and me is moving to the music?" I have.

I keep with me much of the time a letter from a friend of a friend whose boy died of Duchenne at twenty-four. Even though I have never met her, I identify with this mother, because her boy did well; he must have been an outlier, like Ansel, to live to such a ripe old age. My son "was the absolute center of my life," she wrote. "Now I feel like the woman in the Hopper painting 'Cape Cod Morning,' looking out the bay window, wondering what will come next."

Ansel has been away from the house for almost the entire weekend, attending a model UN at a nearby high school Friday night, all day Saturday, and Sunday morning. We are not used to his being away, and Diana and I both feel his absence. The question seems to be not "Is this what it will be like when he's away at college?" but "Is this what it will be like when he is dead?"

"Ansel is what makes the house happy," Diana says later that week, and I think back to the moment of his birth, when I heard a sound that reminded me of the popping of a champagne cork. I think of his name: a variation of Anshel, a diminutive of Asher, which in Hebrew means "happy."

Diana and I try to think about what makes Ansel fun. "He's just a very up person," she says, which is odd, because he is also a big complainer, a class-A kvetch. "Puns," I say. "Remember when he wrote that story about the teenage monster who wasn't frightening enough because he didn't have enough 'scaritonin'?"

"Non sequiturs," Diana offers, and it's true. I used to call Ansel the king of non sequiturs. We might all be having a conversation about, say, the fact that the Lobster Roll is the only restaurant worth going to in the Hamptons. The rest of us might consider the topic exhausted and move rapidly on to two or three unrelated topics. We might be talking about the book I am reading for my psychology class in graduate school, or about how boring Toby finds the second grade. And then, maybe half an hour later, sometimes a day later, Ansel will pipe up with "There *is* that Mexican place in East Hampton," as though there has been not even a tiny break in the conversation. His neuroses are funny too, I say: For instance, he worries about global warming every time the temperature in winter is above average. Everyone else is enjoying the sun, but Ansel is worried! And he always worries about being worried: "Should I be worried?" He is so much like me, and like my father, that I can't help laughing at the reflection.

I am aware that having a limited future makes Ansel freer. Next year, for example, he plans to enroll in the vocational-training program offered by the school system, even though he is on an academic track. The vocation-

al program includes culinary arts, and Ansel knows that is what he wants. Isn't food what he thinks about all the time? The taste of a blood orange or a fresh fig may be the most important, most commented-on part of his day. In English he has chosen "luxury foods" for his special project; he writes of the high cost of hunting for truffles, of the packaging of caviar, of the pleasure of watching the guys behind the counter at Zabbar's slice lox. He faithfully reads the "Dining Out" section of *The New York Times* and leafs through the Penzys Spices catalog.

He doesn't care that taking culinary arts each morning at a location in northern Westchester County will seriously limit his academic program. He does not want to sit through another year of science, even though it would "look better" on his college applications. He has no time to waste. Ansel calls a meeting with me and his guidance counselor and the director of the program, the last of whom he informs, "I can't do something without being serious about it. Otherwise I just don't think it's worth doing." When the director describes the culinary-arts program, which is almost completely hands-on cooking, the corners of Ansel's mouth curve into a little smile, and the guidance counselor, who knows him well, says, "I don't often see that look in Ansel's eyes."

It is apparent that cooking is what he must do. Being a public program, the vocational-training class must accommodate him, so he will probably have an aide for lifting heavy pots off the stove and similar tasks. It seems exciting, although I am a bit concerned that Ansel may miss out on two years of science, French, and math, which are given in the morning, when he will be off school grounds. After the meeting I stay behind to speak with his counselor.

"How would it be if he just does culinary arts for one year, not two?" I ask. Ansel would like to start the program this September, his junior year, but I think it will be better for college-admission purposes if he waits until his senior year.

"Yes, I assumed one year," the counselor says, adding, "Preferably his junior year."

I am surprised. "Because ...?"

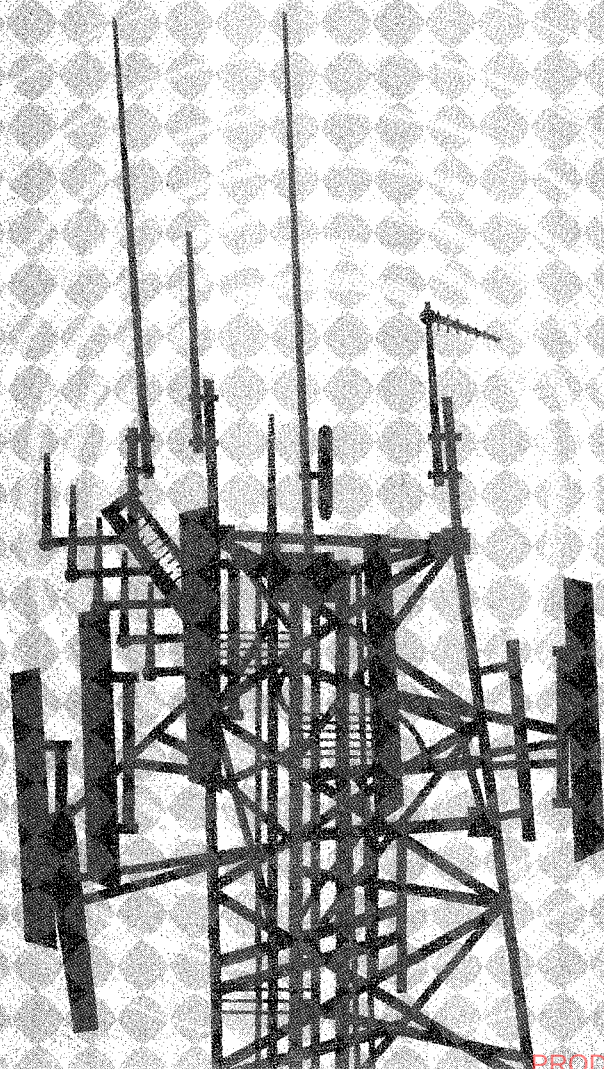
"Because I know culinary arts will be in the morning next year; I'm not sure about the following year. And that would be better as far as academics go. Because he *has* to take history and English. Also ..."

I know the other reason. She lets me say it. "Because we don't know where he will be physically in two years. This may be the only year he *can* do it."

I meet an old friend in the city for lunch. We walk to the restaurant, and she rattles on about the short story she is writing. I cannot open my mouth; I am sure I will start to cry. For two weeks I have been up every night with shoulder pain: a pinched nerve, probably brought on by a slipped disc. Yesterday my kitchen was gutted in

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advance of a major renovation for Ansel's benefit, and there are still bent nails sticking up from the floor every few inches.

My friend tells me about her latest challenge: her therapist has asked her, "What do you want?" As in life.

"Want," I say, almost sneering, and as I open my mouth, everything spills out, and in a little Vietnamese restaurant on Third Avenue, I start weeping. "Who cares what you want?" I say accusingly, and I am frightened by my feeling, which comes out so raw and powerful and pitiless. "I want my son to live a long life. So what?" Every word is a choking effort, my tongue swollen and sore, my throat like gravel. Why bother wanting?

I have two dreams. In the first one, two cars are driving fast in the left lane of the highway, in the wrong direction. Everyone in our car can see as we approach them that this is a very dangerous thing. But it's too late to stop. The cars crash head-on into other cars just in front of us, and I can see the drivers thrown aside, into the air, the cars tin-can crushed. But we are saved. We only witness the horror and move on. We don't even stop. What can we do?

In the second dream Ansel and I come upon a red-rock canyon in the middle of a southwestern desert. We are not really surprised; we have been expecting to find the canyon. It has a lip of rock across its entrance, so we can't see beyond. Its contents are secret. But once we get inside, we are aware of water and sand, and a very beautiful light glinting off beach umbrellas. We are at the ocean. Ansel can walk. We stake out our place on the sand. We have brought our lunch and a blanket, and we sit together and eat: crusty French bread, a wedge of Parmigiano-Reggiano from Todaro Brothers, slices of ripe mango. We are happy.

When Ansel rises from the table today, his legs tremble as he transfers to the wheelchair. Our house is in complete disorder: dining table and refrigerator and microwave are all sitting in the living room, because the kitchen renovation is not complete. The shelves in the living room hold two-by-fours; a sugar bowl; strips of insulation; our good silverware in a blue-felt Bloomingdale's bag; a tin candy box filled with paper clips, packing tape, nail clippers, misplaced trinkets and bits of toys, Pokémon cards and Monopoly hotels.

After dinner Ansel is sitting at the table drinking tea and trying to read *Treasure Island*, which he finds difficult because of the antiquated language and because he has been interrupted over and over again by Diana and Toby, who are bored. I am in the next room, also reading, when I hear a commotion: Ansel is screaming and weeping, "Stop! Stop! I can't stand it, stop!" in a weird, high, animal-like shriek. When I run in, I see that he has taken his empty teacup and begun to bang it over and over again on the

table; while I watch, horrified, he puts the cup down and begins to bang his forehead rhythmically.

"What happened?" I demand angrily of Diana. "What happened?!" I am stamping my foot, the rage spilling out of me. "What did you do?"

"I didn't do anything!" she retorts. "He was burping again—which he always does!—and I told him he was disgusting and he went crazy! God! You blame me for everything!"

Now Ansel begins to shriek again. "I'm an idiot! I'm an idiot! I did it because I'm an idiot!" His cheeks are big and red, and he can't catch his breath, and he begins to whimper. Embarrassment, comprehension, a normal sibling fight turned abnormal—a fifteen-year-old acting like a three-year-old.

"Pick him up," I say quietly to Joe, who has come in from the next room. "Pick him up and carry him into his room."

Later I ask Ansel, "What is it like—that anger? Are you on another planet, like I used to be when I had temper tantrums when I was a kid?" I know that anger is a locked box, but it is also freedom—a soaring, powerful white light.

"I don't know," he says. "I don't know. I just think if I scream and scream and scream maybe I'll stop being angry. Maybe I'll get it all out of me."

"Is there so much anger?" I ask. "What's it about?"

"Please, Mom." He turns his head away. "Please. Let's not talk about it anymore."

Another day he comes home from school depressed. "I'm worried about dying," he says. I honestly don't know what to say. Since when am I so wise anyway? I'm tired, and I worry about dying too. Driving home fast on the Saw Mill River Parkway, I sometimes think, *What will happen to my kids if I die?* It is always Ansel's face I see; how could he forgive me?

So I don't respond, not really, and later, when he is putting together the pieces of his clarinet, he wails melodramatically, "I'm so depressed, and no one cares!" Now I feel compelled to react, so I go into his room. He continues: "I was depressed in the first place, and then when I got to health class my teacher had written 'The Stages of Grief' up on the blackboard—we're studying death—and it just made me more depressed ... And then we saw part of *Schindler's List*, clips of the movie ..."

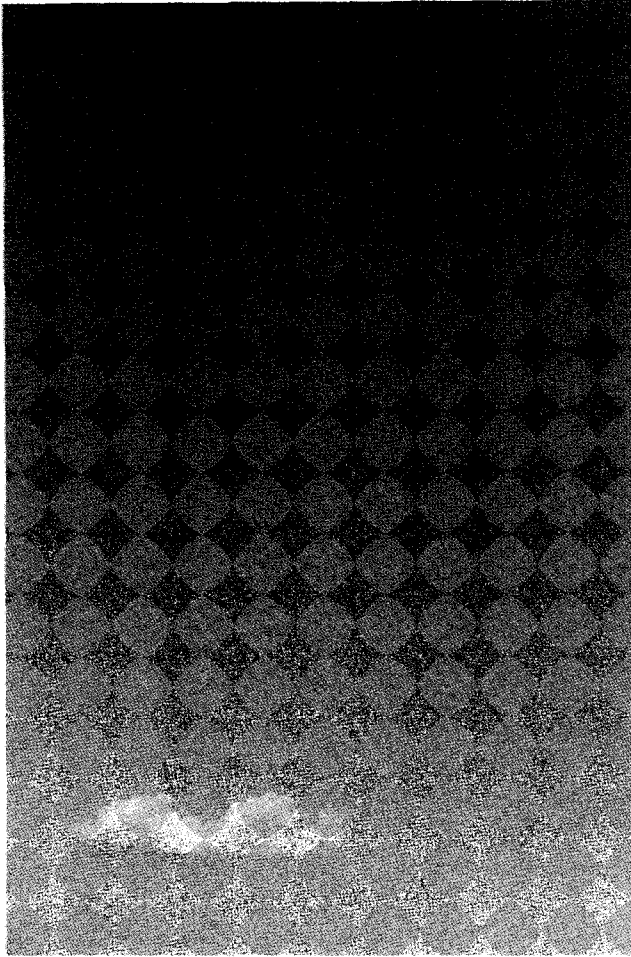
"Did you see the part with the little girl in the red coat who is wandering around the ghetto and then gets shot?" I ask, thinking this had upset him.

He looks at me. "She doesn't get shot, Mom. She hides in the building ..."

"But she does, Ans. Eventually she does get shot."

"Nope," he says. "You're wrong, Mom. You forgot."

I don't want to contradict him again, though I know I'm right. I think of his great capacity for denial. I remember something the physician John Bach wrote in an article



about boys with muscular dystrophy: "Successful adaptation does not depend upon an accurate perception of reality."

This morning I catch sight of Toby's torso while he is dressing. He is seven and a half, slender and small, built like a dancer. He has that nice square chest that a boy is supposed to have, with a line running down the center from breastbone to belly. Ansel would have been beautiful too, perhaps more so. I remember a photo from the summer before Ansel began taking prednisone to slow down the deterioration of his muscles, when he could still walk, ploddingly, up the unrailed front steps. A blue-purple T-shirt, a sun-tinted face: a quite handsome eleven-year-old. Before the chipmunk cheeks, puffy from steroids. That must have been the summer before the wheelchair. My beautiful son.

Ansel's independent reading this month: Mark Twain's *Roughing It*; most of Phillip Lopate's *The Art of the Personal Essay*; "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" and other stories by Ernest Hemingway; M.F.K. Fisher's *A Cordiall Water*; *The Red Badge of Courage*, by Stephen Crane; *National Geographic*; S. J. Perelman's *Chicken Inspector no. 23*. His selection of a project for social studies, any "ism": Dadaism. Favorite music: Louis Armstrong, Thelonious Monk, show tunes, the Buena Vista Social Club.

Ansel and I are sitting in the living room, late. Everyone else has gone to sleep. He is doing his daily exercises: leaning with his palms against the back of the couch, pushing his heels down toward the floor, one at a time, to lengthen the Achilles tendons, trying to stay mobile for as long as possible. He has had a tough day, and he is very tired. Earlier he asked Joe to carry him to the bathroom (he usually walks), and when he got there he fell trying to reach the toilet.

"I don't know why I'm having so much trouble," he says to me later. "Do you think I'm just tired? Why should I be so tired?"

"I don't know, Ans. It may just be the disease. It's getting worse, I guess. That's really crummy, isn't it?"

He doesn't say anything. He is cutting his toenails, concentrating on the task of keeping all the parings in one pile on the coffee table.

"Isn't it?" I repeat.

He looks up. "No. I think everything that happens has a reason."

"I guess that's because you believe in God," I say.

"I used to get depressed thinking about this stuff," he continues, seeming to ignore my remark. "But then I realized it doesn't help. So I don't think about it anymore."

I ask him at another time, "Do you think about the fact that you may not have as many years as other people?"

"No, Mom. I just want to be happy."

Ansel says everything that happens has a reason. He uses the toilet in the middle of the night and flushes it, and the flood of water in the pipes wakes up our collie in the basement, and she begins barking, and I wake up, and it is a quarter to four.

In a way I'm not tired, so I get up and go down to the basement, where the dog is kenneled. She is wide awake and on her feet, waiting expectantly, as though we planned a rendezvous. She nips my heels and tries to push through my legs as we mount the stairs. Then she shoots outside, and I follow.

It's warm out, and completely calm; the three-quarters moon is immense and neon-yellow, hanging over the Palisades, nearly merging with the horizon. It seems otherworldly, like—and I know this is a ridiculous thought—an object from outer space. In other words, it appears as it is—completely apart from, oblivious of, anything human.

I don't know if it's rising or setting. Joe will be able to tell me in the morning, but right now I don't want to know, not yet. I stand there with the mystery of the moon for some time, with the thrill of knowing its beauty—having it to myself for a few rare moments—while the dog sniffs under damp leaves, looking for a place to pee.

When she is finished, I take her back to the basement and give her a full bowl of water, which she drinks thirstily. I go to sleep easily, somehow fulfilled. Ansel says everything has a reason. He is fifteen. In two hours it will be daylight. ■

THE OLD ECONOMY HUSBAND

A short story

BY LESLEY DORMEN

.....

It was that summer, the summer we were fifty and the little Cuban boy went home to no mother, not the first West Nile-virus summer but the second, the Hillary and *Survivor* summer, you know that summer, the summer the women were manhandled in Central Park and the kids lined up for Harry Potter, the summer we were fifty, all of us, fifty and holding, the ones a little older and the ones a little younger, fifty and holding, like thirty and holding only fifty, and it was summer and the ones who were rich were and the ones who weren't weren't, but we were all fifty, every one of us, and holding.

We were in the city that summer because we couldn't afford a vacation and we couldn't afford a beach house, because our oven died and it was vintage 1929 or something and connected to the dishwasher in some complicated way having to do with converted residential hotels—in other words irreplaceable—and one thing led to another and now we had \$20,000 worth of European-made appliances on order. It was the summer we renovated the kitchen.

"Will you call the Miele place in the morning?" I asked Richard. "Will you remember to? Because I can't face it. Will you?" Our contractor was useless. Also he was in Brazil.

"I'll do it," Richard said. "I said I would."

"Because you have to sweetie, okay?" What was I, deaf? He said he would.

One minute I was disgusted with myself for owning a fancy dishwasher I couldn't even pronounce—Meal? Mee-lay? May-lay?—and the next I was in a rage over the incompetence of the people responsible for getting it to me. Those were the two ways I was.

Everything that used to be in the kitchen was spread out all over the living room. One thing about a renovation was you saw all the stuff you never used with sickening clarity: the useless, stupid juice glasses and the dust-encrusted early-eighties cappuccino maker and the rusted flour sifter and the grimy oven mitts from the Caribbean vacations—cartons of junk you dragged guiltily down the hall to the recycling room for the building staff to pick over. The bathroom was now the acting kitchen, and a lot of stuff that used to be in the living room, specifically the dining room, was in my office.

We ate dinner there, in front of the TV. It was summer,

so pickings were slim. We were watching a biography of the actress Jane Seymour—Dr. Quinn, with the hair. How her first husband left her and her life was terrible, then she had a baby, then her life was terrible again, then she had another baby. Like that. Terrible, baby, terrible, baby, commercial, baby, baby, with some husbands thrown in and a castle and the hair.

Richard carried our dirty dinner dishes to the bathroom—it was his week to cook, and like a champ he'd brought in takeout burritos—and reappeared with dessert, from somewhere, on plates: pie. He kissed the top of my head. "Do you know that you're my fave?" he said. He said it a lot lately, probably picking up those voodoo vibes of double-dose Zolof, of Tylenol PM addiction, of night-sweaty breakdown. Those crazy fifty-year-old women! He said, "You're my fave" instead of "I love you," instead of "Take whatever hormone you want, just don't get cancer," instead of "I'm sorry I already had children in my first marriage and didn't want any in my second and you didn't get to be a mother." Fine. He wasn't exactly sorry, but it was fine anyway. He was my fave too. That was me, married to the one man who made me feel like my fiercest, most clear-hearted twelve-year-old self and not to any of the men who made me feel that other way, that euphorically grandiose, desperately insecure, wildly libidinous twenty-five-year-old way.

We ate the pie.

Dr. Quinn was looking back, saying it was all worth it. I picked up the pie plates, headed for the bathroom, and considered walking straight out the door and shoving everything down the compactor. Throwing out was definitely doing it for me lately. I made a few mistakes: our income-tax files from 1990 to 1995, a set of Berlitz tapes (French), the zip-in lining to Richard's raincoat. But why tell him now, when it was only July and he wouldn't need the lining until November? If I were a mother, my kids could be grown and gone by now. Or they could be triplets about to turn three. Or murdered or run over or autistic or kidnapped or cancer-riddled and bald or schizophrenic or in prison or nanny-shaken or searching for their real mother or late getting home from school. At least I'd been spared that—that's what I told myself, because I knew I'd never survive any of those, not a chance.

It was my first summer on earth as an orphan. Wasn't that every kid's fantasy? Well, it had been mine. I loved the Hayley Mills "Biography." *The Parent Trap* was a great movie. My mother had died in the spring. I was used to my father's being dead—he'd been dead for three years, and I'd barely known him. Now I was fifty, not a mother, not a daughter, and the kitchen was in the living room and I didn't know how I was supposed to behave.

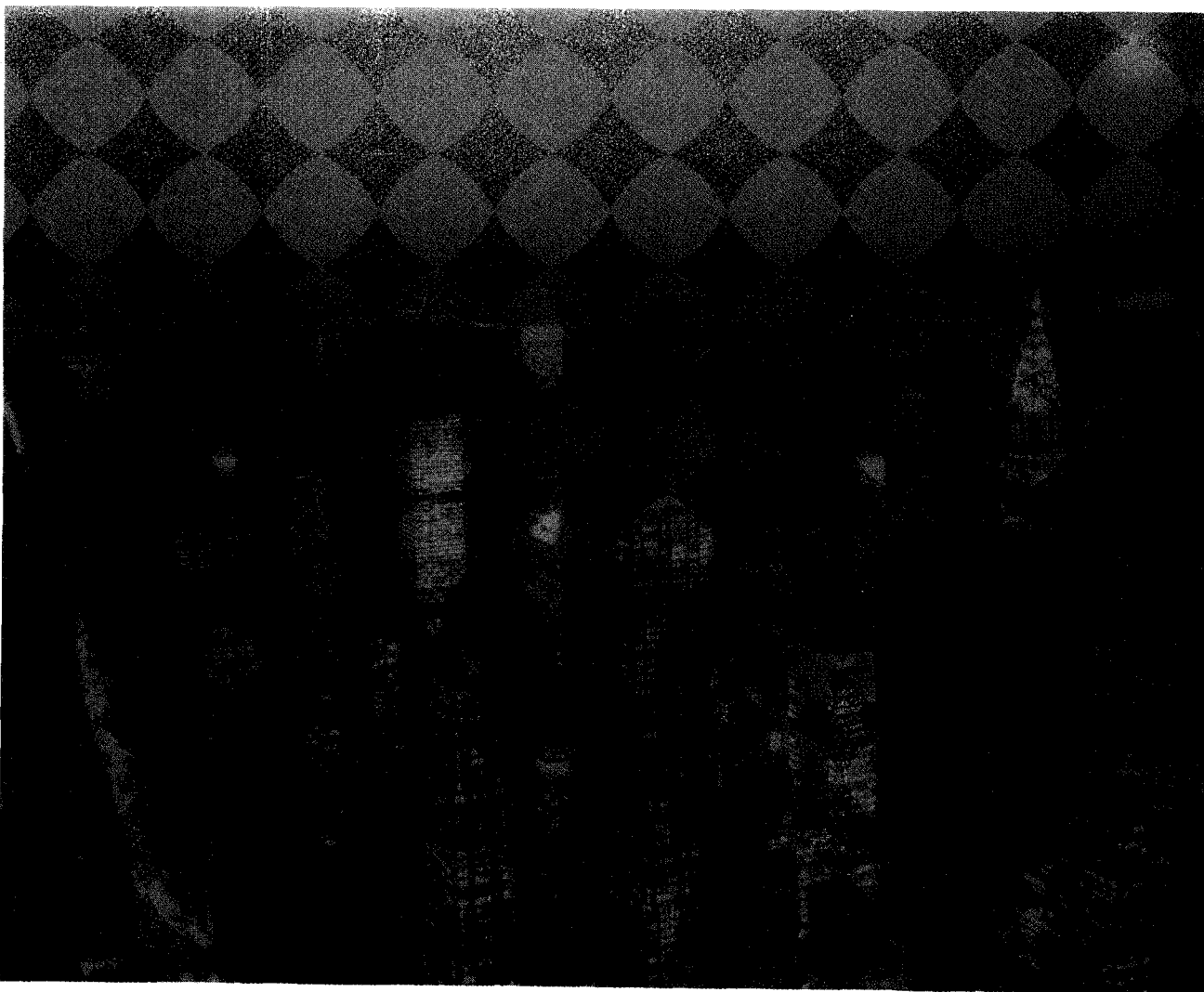
We went to bed, Richard instantly asleep and making those putt-putt noises. I bounced around violently a few times, blew softly into his ear, huffed off to the living-room sofa for a read, and came back to bed with my book; by then he'd quieted down. I fell asleep with the book open. At some point Richard woke, bookmarked my page, turned out the light, and nuzzled my lips with my bite guard until I put it in.

He was long and lanky, my husband, as straight-arrow decent as Jimmy Stewart. Not neurotic or tricky, not the least bit mean. He'd never taken a drug, not even pot. "Are you sure you're even an American?" I asked him. He never got pissed off at me, just came home with that open look on his face, now and then passing on stories about his tem-

per—losing it with the poky old people in the supermarket checkout line, with the virago in the laundry room who took his still-wet clothes out of the dryer, with the punk who threatened him on a street corner. When he cupped my head with his hand while we made love, I was startled all over again at the largeness of it, at what a man's hand can be, and I liked it, those big fingers twined in my hair. I really liked it a lot, that largeness. I just kept forgetting how much I liked it—I had sexual-memory malaise, like one of those eccentrically damaged Oliver Sacks people who couldn't remember a conversation beyond five minutes ago. The Woman Who Couldn't Retain the Memory of Pleasure. Doesn't every marriage contain its own evil twin? Maybe I was ours. Melee, My Lai, malaise.

In the morning Richard made the coffee in the bathroom, and we asked each other how we had slept, and we read the *Times*.

I was happy to get out of the apartment. Besides the money, getting out was why I had taken a job ghostwriting Winston Winter's book on etiquette. Three days a week I took the bus from lower Fifth Avenue to Winston Winter Lifestyles,



EIICHI ANZAI

on upper Madison Avenue. Winston was Manhattan's most famous party and wedding planner. Today we were working on "Chapter Seven: How to Raise a Gracious Child."

I'd always made a decent living as a magazine writer. My specialty was sex and dating, the five-friend, two-shrink service piece dissecting the romantic lives of single women in their twenties and thirties and, occasionally, in their early forties—though not in any of the unmentionable decades after that—for *Marvelous Woman* magazine. I even wrote a column for single women called "On Your Own." Then one day I realized that I couldn't write another word on that subject. What else could I think of to say? How could I ask one more woman or one more representative for women what was going right or wrong in her life, what she wanted that she didn't have, what she wound up getting even though she had never claimed to want it and never asked for it. I couldn't even bear to read any more articles about women's lives, especially the serious ones written by the very smartest women which showed irrefutably all that remained wrong with women and the culture that served women despite everyone's best intentions and efforts. I couldn't bear thinking, Yes! Exactly! My brains hurt from nodding my head in so much agreement.

"Just do what you want for a while," Richard said when I told him how adrift I felt. "We'll dip into the nest egg if we have to." He was an Old Economy husband. He never wanted to dip into the nest egg, ever. His willingness to dip into it now alarmed me. Was now the time for the dipping to begin? And if now wasn't the time, when was the time? I asked him again to explain the financial strategy of investing for the long haul.

"Isn't the haul getting shorter by the minute?" I said.

"Well, that's one way to look at it," he said.

I said no the first time Winston Winter Lifestyles asked me to write the etiquette book. Ghostwriter? Way too beside the point—whatever the point was. They said, "You don't understand! It's not just a guide to etiquette! It's a guide to the new spiritual etiquette!" Then they offered me a little bit more money—enough to make their original offer feel that much more insulting. I've noticed that people tend to offer you things when you say no to them—one more important lesson I've learned too late in life for the discovery to do me any good. Didn't I have to earn *some* money? I mean, I'd never *not* earned money. Richard's salary had already taken a dive. After years of Wall Street money-managing, he was handling finances for a small foundation. He had an office near the Empire State Building. What about haircuts? Was the nest egg expected to pay for those? What about long-term-care insurance? Not to mention the looming face-lift expense. I was beginning to suspect that the whole thing was careering toward some horrifying endgame in which people behaved either well or badly, in which strategies either panned out or didn't pan out, in which being a person with good bone structure meant one thing, and

truly understanding what it means to forgive and forget meant something else. I didn't know what I wanted to do. I wanted to train a golden-retriever puppy to be a working companion for the handicapped, and then weep when the time came to turn the dog over to its grateful new owner.

Maybe it would be good for me to take on an ego-less project, I told myself. That way I'd make some money and empty myself at the same time, create room for something new, something meaningful. Not that etiquette was meaningless. Even the rudest people expressed outrage at the revolting treatment they received from others. No, etiquette was meaningful.

Travel might be involved, Winston's people added, and they pointed out that Winston Winter Lifestyles had an arrangement with The Four Seasons Hotel. Some exquisitely brought-up underling must have recalled my mentioning in a meeting that I had found the beds in that hotel chain to be the only beds I could sleep on without taking a ten-milligram Ambien first. I said okay, I would do it.

Richard left for work. I watched him from the window, and when he reached the corner, I waved, adding a manic shimmy to make him laugh. An hour later I collected my stuff and walked to the bus stop at University Place and Ninth Street, directly in front of the sexy-lingerie boutique. I loved my neighborhood. I'd lived in it for more than twenty years, half of those years the tail end of my long single-woman life, a drama played out just a few blocks away from where I lived now. Every time I left the house, I saw overlapping pieces of my present and my past: the dead-in-the-water blind dates, the still married ex-lover, former colleagues and current shopkeepers, the assortment of nodding-acquaintance neighbors. Once I saw the Pope pass by in his Popemobile. I'd lived here long enough to see my UPS man go completely gray.

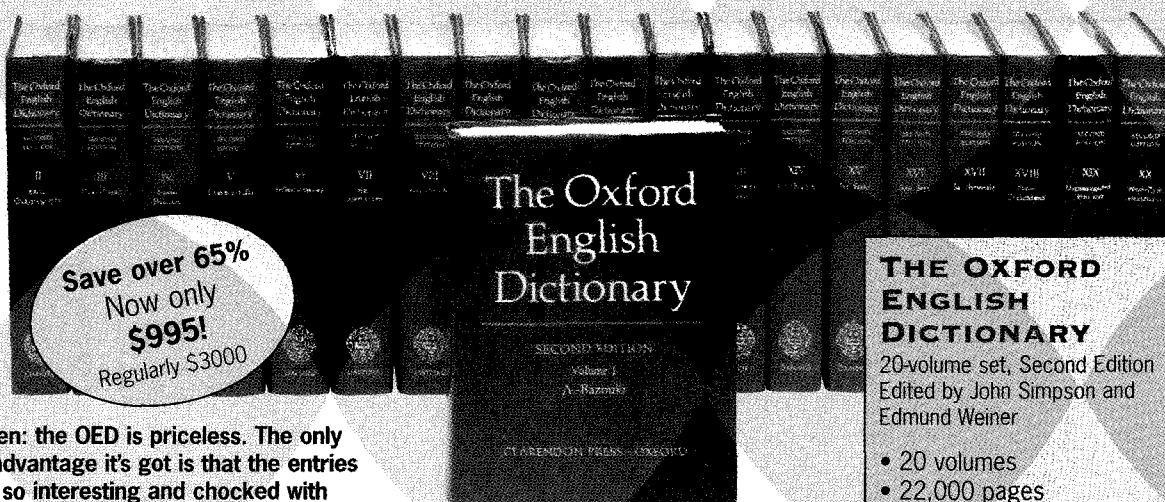
A dozen tiny day campers on a leash drifted past Bagel Bob's. When I first moved to Greenwich Village, I never saw a single infant or toddler on the street. Where were all the families? Maybe on the Upper West Side. I was a suburban girl, transplanted to the city on the morning after the sexual revolution. Those were the days when you slept with every man who so much as caught your eye across a party. I tumbled desperately in and out of love, exempt from worrying about my future when love came along, thrown back into teeth-grinding uncertainty when it vanished. One day, without warning, the new mothers appeared. They blanketed the sidewalks like startling spring snow, pale, dazed, and puffy-eyed, bravely lipsticked, their babies in a pouch. But the mothers were the ones who looked newborn.

When the bus swung over to the curb, I climbed on along with three bus-specific women, capable widows with decorative brooches and sensible shoes. The bus was so civilized. I settled into a window seat, and we bullied our way toward Union Square. At Park Avenue South the bus

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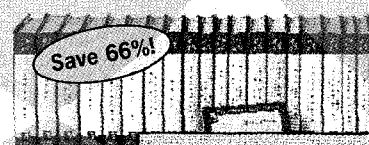
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turned north and began making stops again. By the time we began the crawl up Madison Avenue, no seats were left.

I saw Winston Winter on *Oprah* once. He was explaining how to plan a wedding that included white doves, Byzantine place settings, robed choirs, and chandeliers made from the petals of orchids bred for that purpose. Apparently even ordinary Americans now wanted weddings that resembled papal-investiture ceremonies from the fourteenth century or exact replicas of Celine Dion's marriage ceremony. On television Winston Winter appeared suntanned and buoyant, with very white teeth and an accent I couldn't place but that I recognized from Merchant Ivory films.

I'd never imagined that sort of wedding for myself. I'd never imagined any sort of wedding, really—never pictured myself a bride at all. My single life was staged in a tiny studio apartment that often felt like a waiting room for marriage, but *The Big White Day* never seized my imagination as the denouement I was waiting for. The story I was in seemed more closely based on the disease model. I had turned out to be one of those women for whom the virus of infatuation—fever and delirium followed by a nineteenth-century wasting decline and then protracted convalescence—was potentially lethal. At best the virus became latent, resurfacing as New Year's Eve disease and other nuisance ailments. I noticed that some women had theories about men that, if not cures, seemed to shorten the illness: men were childish, men were selfish, men were insecure. Others relied on talismans and folklore, the equivalent of hanging garlic around your neck: never prepare a cheese tray for a first date; always answer the door without your shoes on; when he calls, announce that you just got out of the shower. "Men like women who are full of life!" my mother offered—somewhat disingenuously, I thought, since we both knew it was the virus's cunning to mimic that feeling.

I didn't have any theories. To me, men were the great mystery, the source of all pleasure and pain. I admired them as poets—the way they described a woman as having a "thin waist," the dress she wore as "sort of greenish." Lacking language for unnamed experience, men were forced to invent it. "If no one else is President, why can't I be President until the new one gets elected?" a lover I wanted to break up with once said. Another, on his way out the door, reached for a song lyric to explain that he always found himself "slip-sliding away."

I realized I'd better get some theories. I was still working on it when Richard wandered into the middle of my love affair with a not-quite-divorced alcoholic Egyptian diplomat. I still don't know how I managed to choose happiness—I barely recognized it. Richard and I married, eventually, in our own home and with the smallest amount of hoopla. That became my theory, but only retrospectively: You can choose.

At Thirty-third Street the bus passed the hotel where my father and his wife had stayed the one time he came to New York, long before I met Richard. I was in my mid-thirties

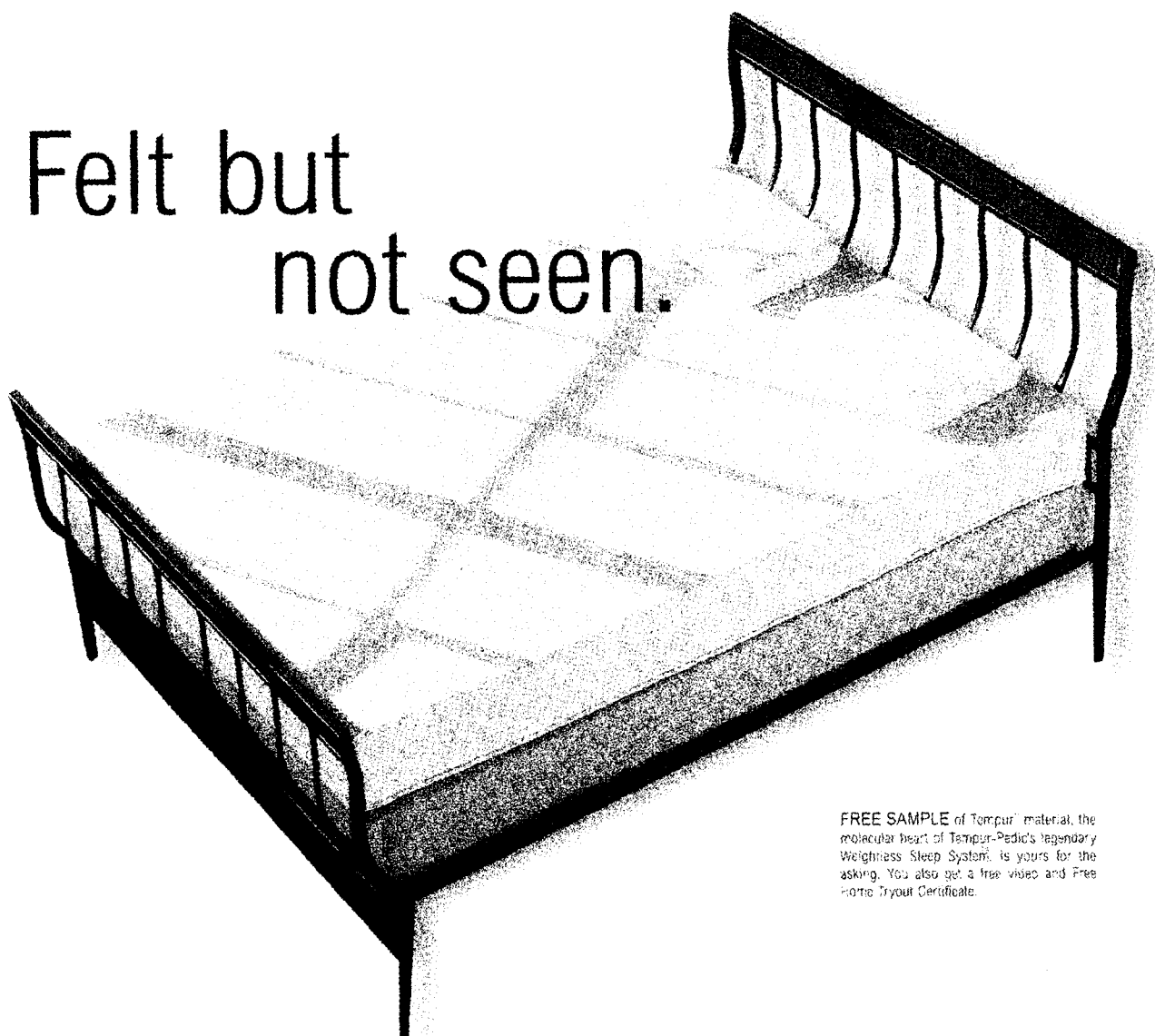
then and hadn't seen my father since I was a teenager. My mother had divorced him when I was six, and remarried twice after that, neither time happily. My father seemed gentle and kind. I asked him two questions. "Do you think I'm pretty?" and "If you had one question to ask me, what would it be?" He said he did think I was pretty—that I looked like my mother. His question was "Why aren't you married?"

When he had a stroke, his wife phoned. Did I want to come? I flew to Cleveland. My father was in intensive care, in a coma. I stood by his bed and held his hand. I repeated his name, "Irv? Irv?" I said, "Can you hear me? If you can hear me, squeeze my hand." Those were the only words I knew to say at the bedside of a comatose person. His wife stood on the other side of the hospital bed and held his other hand. She looked over at me benignly. "Grace," his wife said, "why don't you try calling him Dad?" It turned out to be not at all like a scene from a Golden Age of MGM movie—more like a scene from a Lifetime Original movie. I didn't want to be rude. But when I tried substituting "Dad" for "Irv," my father still didn't answer, and he still didn't squeeze my hand. I flew back to New York the same day.

All the parents were dying, the decent ones and the nightmares, the incest parents and the saints, the parents who doted and the ones who drank, the parents who lied and the parents who beat you up, the parents who always preferred your younger sister older brother dog, the silent fathers and the shopping mothers, the adulterous parents and the religious nuts, the ones who came to every game forgot to pick you up at the movies bought you the wrong birthday present didn't give you piano lessons made you try out for band, the ones who didn't notice you were gifted depressed gay fat thin suicidal talented bulimic and the ones who did. Who would be left to remember World War II and the cha-cha and the thank-you note? Yes, the end of communism was huge. But the end of parents! I went to a funeral just a few weeks ago—the father of a friend. They had an open casket. A woman standing in front of it took out her cell phone and made a call.

At Forty-second and Madison, roughly halfway to Winston's, I gave up my seat to an elderly man and was then jostled—a surprising rudeness—as I grabbed for the pole. The tricky blocks were ahead, the blocks that bordered my mother's neighborhood—the restaurants where we met for lunch, the office buildings where we went for her doctors' appointments. Although my mother had held on to her glamour almost to the end, glaucoma had demanded certain compromises: rubber-soled shoes and minimal makeup. Every six weeks we went to the ophthalmologist. I sat with her in the darkened examining room while the ancient, elegant Dr. Berg checked her eye pressure. My mother's feet, once snappy in slingbacks, sat meekly on the footrest like those of an obedient kindergartner, in Reeboks and slipping-down socks. A few months before she died, we went for an MRI. By then my mother thought she was being kept against

Felt but not seen.



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her will at a spa, one where the guests had scarily whitened faces. "Do you have a locker here too?" she asked me in a polite voice. I didn't know what to say. Who would know what to say? What was the right thing to say? A cell phone at a casket was clear. Everything else was up for grabs. The MRI room was as noisy as any Manhattan construction site. I removed my watch and my wedding band, as instructed, and sat on a folding chair at one end of the tunnel, holding my mother's foot as she disappeared inside. I wondered who would hold my foot.

PAIN

The mailman
is drunk.

It is spring. It

is spring

and the mailman is

drunk, I see him

shaking his way

down the wet

street from my

window, which

is pretty. My

pretty window the mailman

is drunk in, out

in his slicker

and bright

boots—did I say

it is raining? Rain

and the mailman

is drunk, and

eight, only eight

homes on this

street, and he

is crashing

into air

in the middle—

I love him

for this, love him

drunk, in rain,

in the green pain

oblivion is—

Is it

sick, or strange

placing myself

here in the

story, his green

princess? I did

say it is

spring, and I

see him, and see

the leaves,

slappy wet, begin

to make for the mailman

a frame, a frame

shaped like a leafy

heart, a heart

as leafy as if

he—

as if we

were, this raining

morning, happy.

—LAURA NEWBERN

Abby was the person with whom I regularly shared Winston's etiquette advice. Abby had been my editor at *Marvelous Woman*. "The man is irony-proof," Abby often said in a reverent voice. She owned all of Winston's books. She was right. Everything about Winston was un-ironic. Abby was particularly taken with Winston's dictum about the proper moment to pick up your fork and begin eating your meal at a dinner party. "Once three or four plates are served, you may begin," Winston said. "A gracious host or hostess doesn't want guests to eat food that has grown cold."

"Really? He said that?" Abby seemed as surprised to hear this as Richard had been when I told him that Warren Beatty and Shirley MacLaine were brother and sister.

I wrote my first article for Abby, on contraception etiquette. While I was doing research for it, I came across Emily Post's rules for debutantes. My mother had given me a copy of Emily Post's *Etiquette* when I graduated from high school. I had dutifully moved that book from shelf to shelf over the decades since, without ever once opening it. How was I to know that hidden away in that seemingly useless volume were three rules containing all the guidance any young woman would ever need? Abby and I quoted them to each other regularly: "Don't hang on anyone for support. Don't allow anyone to paw you. On no account force yourself to laugh." Emily Post didn't cover contraception etiquette.

I got off the bus at Seventy-ninth Street and walked the few blocks to Winston's apartment. They were the same elegantly proportioned blocks I traveled to when I was seeing my former psychotherapist, Dr. Isabella Gold. Week after week, year after year, I carried individual dreams from my apartment to Dr. Gold's office, dream by dream, one dream at a time, as if my job were to transfer an entire universe of matter from one place to another by the teaspoonful. Then one day the work was done. All of the matter that had been in one place was now in another place entirely, and I couldn't picture or imagine what used to be in either place. That was New York in a nutshell, I realized. Things changed all the time. As soon as the change was complete, reconstructing the past was impossible. It couldn't be done. The former landscape would always feel like a dream or a lie.

Winston's building was small and elegant, with a long green canopy and an elevator man. The first time I had come here, the elevator man repeated, "Winston Winter!" and took me to the eleventh floor. When the doors opened, I found myself in a small, red-lacquered jewel box of an entryway, with an umbrella holder, a gilt mirror, and two doors. One door led to the living quarters of the apartment, the other to the office quarters. "Have a good day!" the elevator man said, and left me there. I couldn't remember which door I had been told to knock on. I began to break into a bit of a sweat. It reminded me of a brainteaser my husband liked: Twins confined in a tower room with two doors. One door leads to freedom, the other to the executioner. One twin tells

the truth, the other twin lies. Ask one twin one question to determine the door to freedom. What question? Which twin? That to me seemed to sum up everything.

I discovered that it didn't matter which door I knocked on, because no one heard me. Eventually the housekeeper, Margaret, wandered out with the recyclables and let me in. "Oh, he's so late, my boss!" she said. "Juice?" Then she pointed toward a room with walls the color of eggplant, and I went in and sat down on a burnt-orange velvet sofa. Winston shouted from another room, "Give her some of that mango-pango juice!" Occasionally he sang out an order to an assistant whose name was Patricia or Felicia or Delicious. "Navy taffeta for the tables! And four dozen candelabra!" While I waited for Winston, I tried to identify the wonderful scent of the candle burning on the wenge table and attempted to add up how much everything in that one room cost and began to feel downhearted about my own apartment, with its deficiency of silver cigarette boxes and 1930s cocktail accessories. Why hadn't I thought of eggplant as a color?

This time the door was open, and I walked right in. Felicia Delicious was doing something with bubble wrap. "Good morning, Grace," she said. "How are you this morning?" She was twenty-three, tops. I wanted to throw my arms around her.

"Gracie, my love! Just finishing up the morning's e-mail. Get comfy, darling." Winston was seated at his Art Deco desk, laptop open. He wore narrow pants and the thinnest of summer cashmere pullovers, both the color of slate, and on his feet were exquisite objects that seemed to be the marriage of an athletic shoe and a Ferrari. His face looked as if it had just returned from Sardinia.

I put my microcassette recorder on the table and opened my notebook. I wrote down everything Winston said in case of tape malfunction.

He came around to the sofa, kissed me on both cheeks, and settled into one corner. "So where are we today, my sweet?"

"We're beginning Chapter Seven," I said. "How to Raise a Gracious Child." Oh, boy. Winston Winter on child-rearing.

"Very important! A topic dear to my heart. Because you know, Grace, good manners begin with children. Margaret! Mango-pango on a tray, please, thank you! With instilling respect and integrity and compassion. With setting limits."

I smiled. That was my interviewing technique. I wrote down the words "respect, integrity, compassion."

Winston lifted his exfoliated chin and sniffed the un-ironic air.

"Let's see ... A section on those vile people who let their children run up and down the aisle of airplanes ... Should we talk about physical punishment now or at the end?"

"I think we should probably stick to etiquette," I said. "Like, should you bring your kid to a dinner party. Only because, well, that's more your area, right?"

"Never strike your child in anger."

I wrote it down.

He hit PAUSE while Margaret set down a tray with juice. "What about you, Grace? Do you and your husband plan on having children? Thank you, Margaret, lovely." How old did this man think I was? Did I register on him at all?

At lunchtime we sat on tall stools in the handsome stainless-steel and wood kitchen eating Margaret's vegetable soup while Winston oversaw the cutting and arranging in various-sized vases of that day's delivery of orange roses. During "Chapter Four: An Organized Home Is a Spiritual Home," Winston had opened his kitchen cabinets and bedroom closets—spices alphabetic, Prada white to black—and discussed his philosophy of creating a peaceful environment: "Edit! Edit! Edit!" During "Chapter Six: Positive Energy in Difficult Situations," Winston addressed the etiquette of blame: "Let it go!" Every chapter seemed to have an etiquette situation capable of being resolved by "Send a fragrant candle!"

Winston and I finished up close to five. I walked to the subway, feeling perfectly empty. Walking down the stairs, plucking my metro card from where I'd stuck it inside a book, I sensed the absence of something. I took the local to Union Square, and when I had gotten off and walked up the stairs and onto the corner of Broadway, I stopped. I rummaged through my bag. My wallet was gone. Uncomprehending grief swam through my bloodstream. Then it swam out. I remembered: I had an 800 number at home, all my account numbers were stored on my computer, I could replace my driver's license by mail. My legs moved again, and I walked toward home.

In the window of the coffee shop on University Place and Twelfth Street, I saw the two ancient sisters seated in their customary window booth having the early-bird dinner. Both women had snowy hair and the tactful, pensive face of Miss Marple. I was always struck by how complex and subtle a variation each sister was on the other—the piled white hair, the parchment skin, the casually worn quirky piece of jewelry, the comfortably inward expression—and by how deeply at home each sister appeared to be in the other's company. That's me and Abby, I always thought, when the husbands are dead. I wished that I knew everything about those sisters and their lives. Who had they loved and what had their little piece of New York looked like back at the beginning and which small luxuries had fallen away and which did they still cling to? Were they still moving forward or content to hang on? That was the mystery.

When I got home, I tried not to look at the boxes, at the gaping empty kitchen, at the living-room mess. I went straight to my office and called American Express, and the bank, and then Abby, because I had to say out loud, "My wallet was stolen." I remembered the lengthy recovery time such routine losses exacted when I was twenty-five and thirty, the doomed sense that keys and credit cards and salad-bar coupons were not only irreplaceable but ominous metaphors

for everything bad to come. But by the time my apartment was burglarized, when I was thirty-five, I'd come to know the losses bluntly for what they were: stuff you missed and, eventually, replaced, even though you never got back exactly what you'd lost. I spoke out loud to the quiet apartment. "Mom," I said. I said it again. Then I flung open the hall closet and threw out every cheap umbrella I could get my hands on.

Being fifty give or take was like being an original Supreme. Some later groups could call themselves The Supremes, they could sing "Baby Love," but we were the one and onlies. And that was also our curse. Because no experience we had in our lives could be unique. We would briefly, naively, think we were having a unique experience—laughing at Steve Martin, eating sushi, forgetting the word for fear of leaving the house—and then, five minutes later, everyone would be claiming that experience. The experience would be on the cover of *Newsweek*, and people for whom we had the deepest contempt would be selling a miniseries based on it. Everyone's parents were going to die, even the parents of those middle-aged celebrities with twenty-five-year-old skin who paid Winston Winter to plan birthday parties for their toddler triplets.

Around eight someone phoned from Billy's Topless, a bar on Sixth Avenue. My wallet was there, emptied of cash but with credit cards in it. I said thank you, and that I'd come and pick it up, and thank you again.

Richard called just after that. How was I? I said I was fine and told him all about Winston and the wallet. I stood at the window talking to him like that, about my day, watching the midsummer sky turn to dusk. I could see Richard's office building from the window where I stood. The sky turned a deep navy as we talked, and then it was night, and the building's upper stories blazed with light. When I concentrated and counted carefully, I was able to find exactly where Richard was, up on the sixtieth floor. We knew we had a spectacular view when we moved into our apartment, but we'd always seen it in daylight. Not until our first night there did we really know how lucky we were.

We talked a little more that way, me at home staring out the window, Richard gathering up his things before heading home. We made dinner plans.

"Ready?" Richard said then.

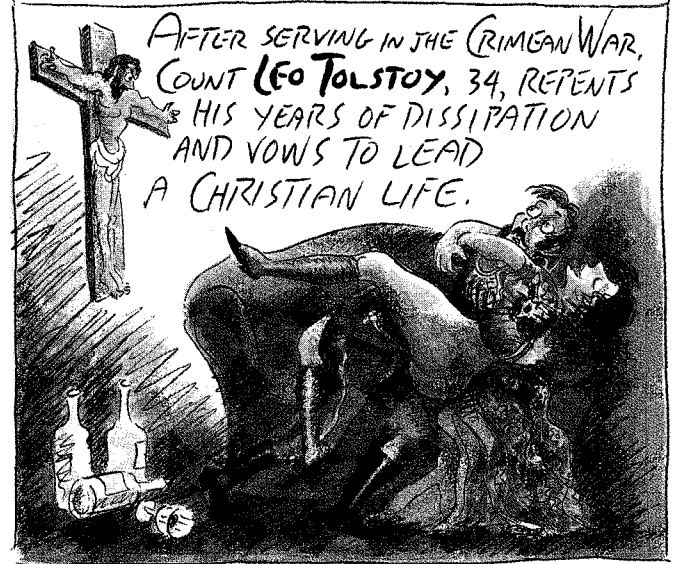
"Yep."

He switched to speakerphone. Then he flicked the lights in his office on and off, on and off. One, two, three blinks.

"Can you see them?" he called out. "Can you see them now?"

I could, I could see them, an improbable mile away, at not quite the top, a narrow band of flickering lights.

"Yes!" I said. "I can see them!" What were the odds of such a thing in such a city? What were the odds? I remembered how happy I was. I was just happy. ▀



IN THEIR FIRST FIFTEEN YEARS SHE DELIVERS EIGHT CHILDREN AND HE PRODUCES WAR AND PEACE AND ANNA KARENINA.

EACH KEEPS A DIARY DETAILING THE UNFORGIVABLE BEHAVIOR OF THE OTHER.



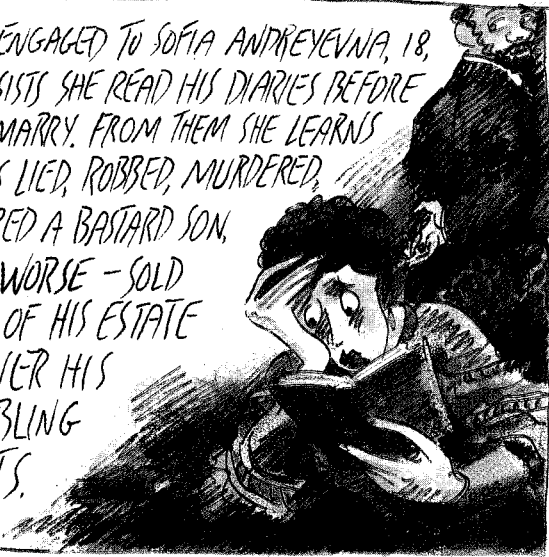
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RETURNING TO HIS ESTATE, TOLSTOY OFFERS HIS SERFS THEIR FREEDOM. CERTAIN IT'S A TRICK, THE SHREWD PEASANTS REFUSE EMANCIPATION.



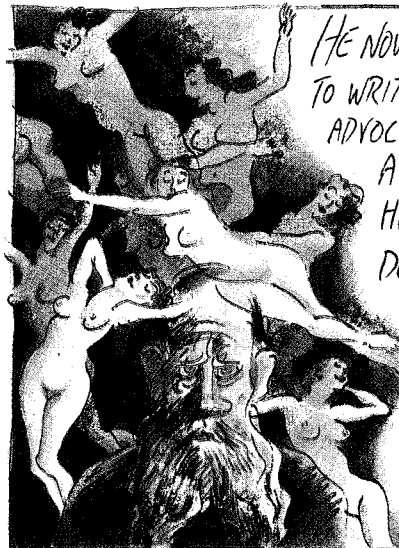
HE IS ENGAGED TO SOFIA ANDREYEVNA, 18, BUT INSISTS SHE READ HIS DIARIES BEFORE THEY MARRY. FROM THEM SHE LEARNS HE HAS LIED, ROBBED, MURDERED, FATHERED A BASTARD SON, AND - WORSE - SOLD MUCH OF HIS ESTATE TO COVER HIS GAMBLING DEBTS.



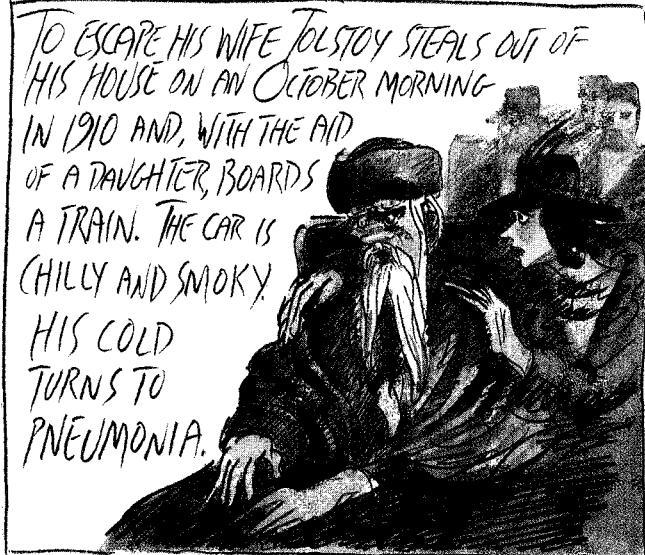
WHY ME? HEFTY ROYALTIES FROM HIS NOVELS AND STEADY INCOME FROM HIS ESTATE FORCE TOLSTOY TO FACE THE FACT THAT HE IS RICH. THIS REALIZATION PLUMMETS HIM INTO SUICIDAL DEPRESSION.



HE NOW ABANDONS FICTION TO WRITE RELIGIOUS TRACTS ADVOCATING CELIBACY. BUT AGE HAS NOT FREED HIM FROM SEXUAL DESIRES. SOFIA BECOMES PREGNANT FOR THE THIRTEENTH TIME.



TO ESCAPE HIS WIFE TOLSTOY STEALS OUT OF HIS HOUSE ON AN OCTOBER MORNING IN 1910 AND, WITH THE AID OF A DAUGHTER, BOARDS A TRAIN. THE CAR IS CHILLY AND SMOKY. HIS COLD TURNS TO PNEUMONIA.



Edmund Sorel
HE IS BURIED ON HIS ESTATE IN A SPOT OF HIS OWN CHOOSING. WHERE, IT IS SAID, A GREEN STICK IS HIDDEN THAT, IF FOUND, WILL REVEAL THE SECRET OF UNIVERSAL LOVE.



LITERARY LIVES by Edward Sorel

PURSUIITS & RETREATS

TRAVEL

STORM ISLAND

If you like extreme weather, the French island of Ouessant is a good place to find it

BY WILLIAM LANGEWIESCHE

.....

Brittany shapes the west coast of France into a ship's prow pushing bravely into the North Atlantic. At its farthest seaward extension lies Ile d'Ouessant, an austere and windswept island surrounded by reefs and strong currents, about two hours by passenger ferry from the port city of Brest. The island, four miles long by two miles wide, consists of pastureland cut by stone walls and edged by cliffs and offshore rocks slowly crumbling into the sea. It is inhabited by about 800 permanent residents, some of whom raise sheep, and an equal number of people who come only for the summers. British mariners, who call the island Ushant, have written about it for so long and with such foreboding that the name alone evokes dread. In particular, the wreck there in 1896 of the passenger liner *Drummond Castle*, in which at least 240 lives were lost, still scars Britain's collective memory. But that tragedy was just one in a long and unfinished list. Indeed, so many Britons have come to grief in these waters that, local lore has it, the royal family helped to fund the construction of a church and established the island's cemetery for the English dead.

The French, too, have suffered heavily on Ouessant, as have other seafaring people. In any language it is one of the ocean's notorious places, the treacherous leeward shore at the entrance to the English Channel, a deadly outcrop of rocks among strong tidal currents, where even now, in this era of powerful engines and satellite

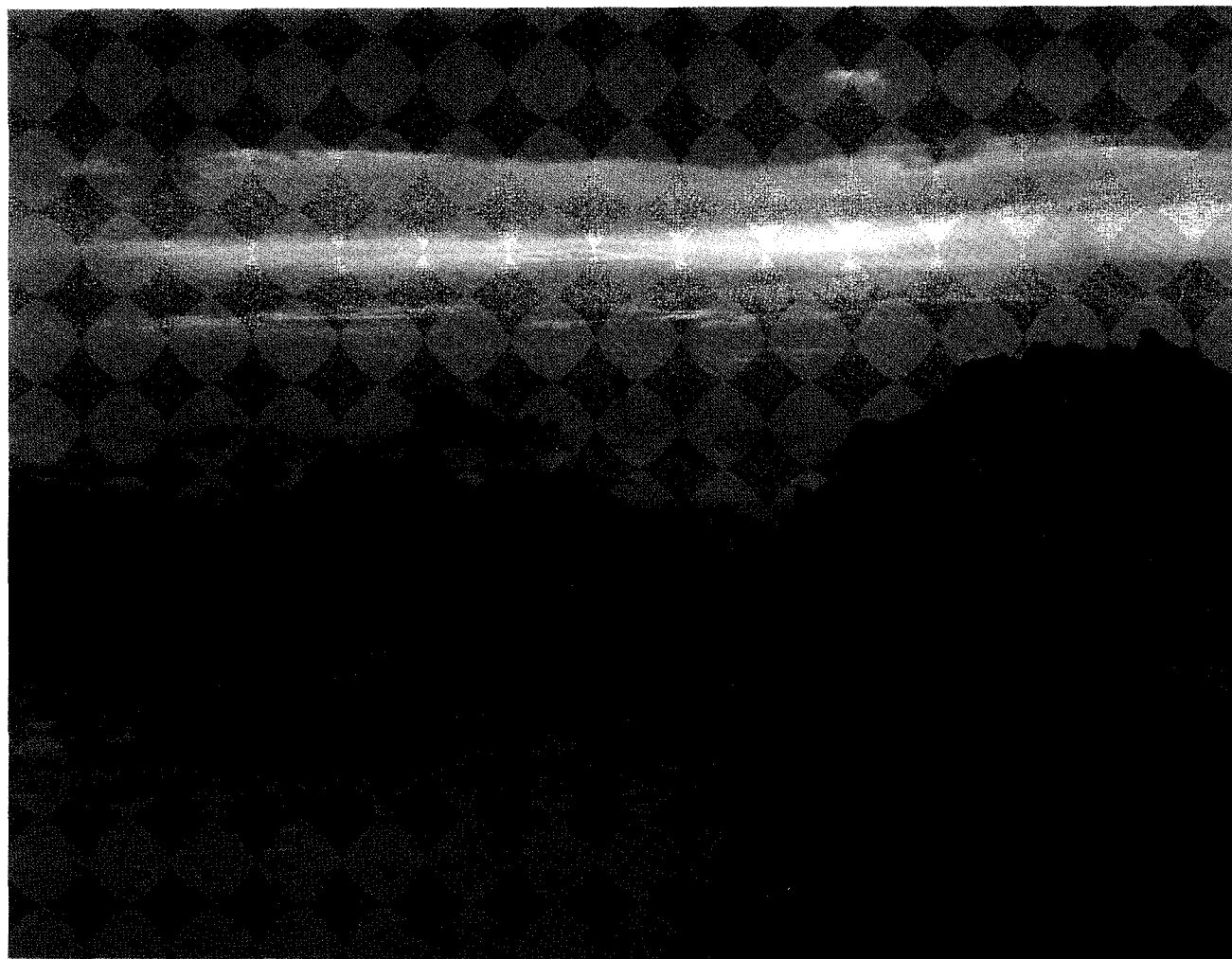
navigation, ships continue to be threatened. One reason is purely geographic: Ouessant stands so far to the west (at 5°W, nearly the same longitude as Land's End, in England) that it interferes with the shipping routes to several major European ports, compressing an average of 150 vessels a day into narrow lanes that pass close offshore. But for visitors the more interesting reason for its reputation is the weather, which by coastal standards is some of the stormiest in the world. The relevant storms are enormous low-pressure systems that swirl eastward across the North Atlantic and hit the island undiminished by any landmass—usually in the period from October through February. They can generate mountainous waves and pack winds of well over 100 miles an hour.

During the summers, which are generally benign, the drama may not be obvious. You can make a tame day trip of a visit to Ouessant and tour the island on bicycles that are available for rental at the ferry landing. The roads are quiet. It takes about a half hour to wobble by bike into the island's only village, Lampaul, and another half hour to wobble to the cape at the far end. If you explore some of the hamlets, or stop for a traditional meal of crêpe-like galettes and mildly alcoholic cider, you can occupy another few hours. The most likely excitement is a passing rain shower or an encounter with lambs; the greatest mental effort required is remembering to wobble back to the ferry in time. But even on a calm summer

day you find evidence of the elemental battles that continue to be fought on Ouessant—in the unusual concentration of five lighthouses, and the grim radar tower looking out to sea; in the anchored haystacks and the braced sod shelters erected in the pastures for the protection of sheep; in the hunkered-down stone houses, many huddled shoulder to shoulder against westerly gales; in the clumped grass, wind-sculpted bushes, and stunted trees; in the stories of apocalypse that the residents tell to explain why their island is special. Forget the summer—Ouessant is a place to visit in the winter, during the fury of an ocean storm.

The timing is of course critical. Big storm systems, which are constantly metamorphosing, may be anticipated as much as five days in advance, but their path and intensity can be forecast accurately only about two days ahead of time. During the winter the island is served by a single daily ferry, which departs from Brest at 8:30 A.M. but suspends service during the most violent weather, so storm enthusiasts have to drop other plans and head for Ouessant almost as soon as the forecast solidifies.

Getting the forecast requires some effort, because on TV and in most newspapers Europe tends to go in for the "Mr. Sky is going to cry" style of weather reporting, which is not detailed enough. To move beyond this, though, all you really need to know is that Ouessant lies in a part of Brittany called Finistère. If you have access to the Internet, you can find your way to the French and British meteorological offices, which tend to demand subscriptions for their marine forecasts but do not charge for general information, which is serviceable. If you understand French, you can receive by telephone a five-day coastal forecast that's free except for the cost of the call: phone



011-8-36-68-08-29 and then press “*” followed by “2” for the waters of Finistère. You can also phone a service called Météo Consult (011-1-39-28-00-28) and for about \$15 talk to a live person, who may or may not speak English. Or try the Web site, www.meteoconsult.fr. Before you do any of that, however, you need to look at the newspapers with decent weather pages (*The Times* of London, *Le Monde*, the *International Herald Tribune*) and wait for a really strong low to appear.

That’s what I did last year—until, on a December evening at the close of a working week in The Hague, I noticed that what had been an innocuous atmospheric disturbance on the previous day seemed to have organized itself into a tightly wound system on a collision course with the French coast. I called France from a pay phone in a café and navigated through the choices to get the forecast for Finistère. A marine

warning had been issued in anticipation of a storm of Force 12 on the Beaufort scale: winds greater than 74 miles an hour, air filled with foam and spray, sea white with spray, exceptionally high waves, visibility bad. The French were advising ships along the coast to seek shelter. The storm was due to hit Ouessant as early as the following evening. I had less than twelve hours to get to Brest and make the morning ferry—after which, I had to assume, the island might be cut off. My suitcase was, as usual, already packed; I caught the next flight to Paris and took the fast, four-hour train to Brest. I arrived in the early hours of the morning, in a heavy rain with lightning in the sky.

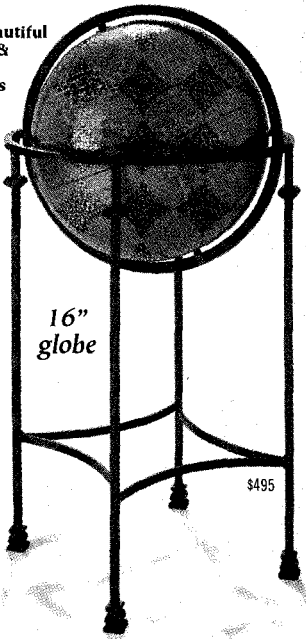
Brest is an ugly city—a deepwater port that was commandeered by the Germans during World War II, bombed into rubble by the Allies, and rebuilt badly afterward. But the waterfront is pleasant in a utilitarian way. If you arrive the night before your ferry, you

can stay in one of several small harbor hotels, eat simply, and drink with the locals. The best of those establishments is the *Maison des Gens de Mer* (011-2-98-46-07-40), the Seamen’s Home, where you can get a clean room for about \$25. I had the traditional breakfast there—a pot of strong coffee and a sliced baguette with salted butter—together with deckhands and dockhands at the end of the graveyard shift and fishermen heading out before dawn. The ferry for Ouessant lies just across the street. Reservations are possible (011-2-98-80-80-80) but unnecessary, though it’s prudent to keep a close watch on the departure schedule, which may suddenly be advanced because of an oncoming storm.

My ship last December was a high-bowed 150-foot steel beauty driven by twin 2,500-horsepower diesels, with a high, wide bridge, two passenger decks aft, and a crane and a cargo hold forward—a vessel designed for hard duty.

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It was manned by a crew of eight and commanded by an articulate gray-bearded captain who had fished for tuna off San Diego and was known locally for his ship handling in heavy weather. Against a strong wind and in moderate rain, we rolled with the first fugitive swells while still in Brest's well-protected bay. Soon afterward we emerged into the open ocean, and the ship began twisting and shuddering through seas as high as twenty feet—steep slopes that reared to windward and broke across the entire superstructure. The crew worked the helm and throttles actively, sometimes slowing abruptly to keep the bow from battering the heaviest waves.

The ship was almost empty. Of the twenty-eight passengers aboard, most were islanders going home—a rugged-looking bunch. They sat in the warmth and isolation of the lower cabin, read-

dallied just long enough to offload the passengers and a single packet of cargo. Then it cast off, hurrying home ahead of schedule. The wind by now was gusting to 50 miles an hour and driving veils of rain under a low, scudding overcast; the temperature was in the high 40s. I threw my suitcase into the back of a taxi-van and took the quick ride into Lampaul, where the choice of hotels in the winter is limited to two, both small and offering excellent southwesterly views of the town's treacherous, rock-strewn bay.

The larger of those hotels is the Roc'h Ar Mor (011-2-98-48-80-19), which has brightly renovated rooms with TVs, private bathrooms, and in some cases little balconies. Those with a view start at \$45 a night. If you've decided on this trip for romantic reasons, you might want to go all out and spend an extra \$20 to stay in the top-

I crept as close as I dared, wedged myself into the shelter of a rock, and spent an hour trying in vain to judge the scale of a gargantuan scene. The breakers were huge, and when they hit the boulders, they exploded twice as high.

ing the standard French tabloids and hardly bothering to glance outside. Braced and sheltered by a steel bulkhead, I stood one level above on the exposed afterdeck as the waves broke against the hull and tremendous sheets of seawater slammed into the benches bolted farther aft. It was a good ride. The only other tourists on board were a Swiss couple, who came outside to share the view. They had not previously heard about the oncoming storm but had guessed correctly that on Ouessant in the winter they would find some solitude. The man enjoyed the action but went inside after a while to smoke a cigarette. The woman was equally game but soon grew ill. I held her by the belt as, between the waves, she vomited over the rail.

After an unusually slow trip of two and a half hours the ship arrived at the poorly sheltered landing on Ouessant, where, jolting against the stone jetty, it

end "panoramic" room, which has wrap-around windows. For my purposes the hotel seemed, if anything, too nice, though I did enjoy a spider crab for lunch at the restaurant there.

I checked into the other establishment, down the street—the Hôtel Duchesse Anne (011-2-98-48-80-25), a ramshackle house standing in isolation above the bay like a sentinel against the storms. For \$28 a night I got a large and pleasantly seedy room that overlooked the water through big, rain-splattered French windows leaking wind. Downstairs the hotel had a small dining room, where I never ate, and a café-bar that offered a good \$5.00 breakfast and where in the afternoons a group of aging regulars gathered to drink, smoke, and pass the time.

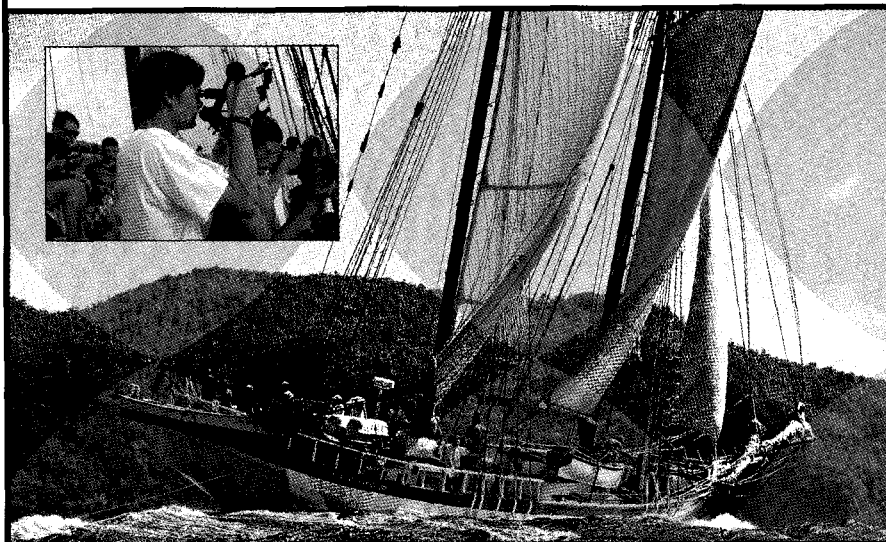
I went outside to explore Ouessant in the worsening weather. For six hours, into the night, I sloshed down the lonely roads, past sheep and shut-

tered hamlets, to the windward western coast, where a heavy surf pounded the rocks, raising brown salty foam that tumbled in patches through the pastures. I ran into the Swiss couple, who, despite their original intention to read cozily in a café, had been caught up in the spirit of the place and, like me, had been walking for hours. The scenery, we agreed, was eerily beautiful, and of course evocative of the sea, but what mattered was not anything specific so much as the mood: the entire island was infused with the drama of the oncoming weather.

That evening, at the bar of the Duchesse Anne, there was suddenly reason for doubt: from Brest the television news reported that the storm had diminished to Force 11. Though its winds were still forecast to be severe, the system was lingering offshore and was not expected to peak at Ouessant until late the following night. The man with whom I watched the news had spent decades as a volunteer on the Ouessant lifeboat, an all-weather vessel with a history of heroic rescues. He turned away from the TV with Gallic disdain and said, "Alors, it's a storm for sissies."

Nonetheless, the next day passed in continuing expectation. The ferry made a valiant run hours ahead of schedule, and after a brief pause at the jetty, turned and disappeared into the turmoil of the sea. By lunchtime the mood on the island was electric with the news that the mightiest rescue vessel of them all, a celebrated ocean tug named *Abeille Flandres*, had taken up position in the partial shelter of the island, where it would patrol for the duration of the storm, ready to assist any passing ship that began to drift or founder. I spotted the tug that afternoon, while walking along a coastal trail; its brutish form emerged slowly from a squall and idled through the worsening weather with a distinctive arrogance. Awhile later the clouds lifted for a time, the rain stopped, and the winds died down—a tedious spell during which I walked my clothes nearly dry. But the regulars at the Duchesse Anne assured me that the fury would be upon us late in the night. The hotel's barometer was falling

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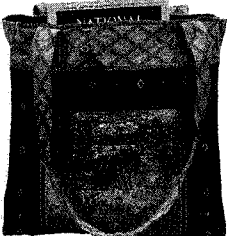
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rapidly. And sure enough, with darkness the rain returned and the wind shifted and freshened.

By dinnertime the wires and stone corners of the village had set up a mournful howl. I took refuge in Lampaul's best restaurant and bar, a small, attractive place called Ty Korn, which specializes in local seafood and, with its narrow confines and paneled walls, has some of the warmth and intimacy of a wooden ship. The two Swiss were there, chatting happily with others at the bar—a comfortable and cosmopolitan crowd, many of them, including the owners, refugees from mainland life. The storm was expected to hit its peak from 1:00 A.M. to 3:00. I told the Swiss that I planned to head out around midnight and walk to Ouessant's principal lighthouse and the exposed westernmost point that lies beyond it, and I invited them along. They declined, which was just as well, because the utter solitude of that walk turned out to be part of its appeal.

The night was cold and wet. I don't know how hard the wind was blowing, though I later heard that it was sustained at 90 miles an hour, with higher gusts. Outside the shelter of the village the walking was slow, like straining uphill but on flat ground, leaning forward with arms folded back, powering into the gale. I left my flashlight in my pocket, preferring to move in the darkness, drawn by the distant lighthouse as migrating birds caught in bad weather are said to be. There were no cars on the roads. At one point a power line arced, throwing sparks into the night, but otherwise there was no sign of damage or flying debris—for the obvious reason that Ouessant is naturally well scoured.

After a long struggle I came to the base of the lighthouse, a massive structure painted in black and white stripes, rising 200 feet above the sea, and topped by two levels of rotating lenses sending multiple beams into the inkiness of the storm. Those beams, turning silently overhead, angled strangely downward in a way that created the illusion of rotating cones, and passing through wind-blown waves of rain and ocean spray, remain in my memory as one of the

world's fantastic sights. Eventually I pried myself away and continued toward the end of the island, along cliffside trails and across open terrain. Enormous waves slammed into the rocks below, shaking the earth and raising plumes that were seized and atomized by the wind and mixed with the rain. The resulting deluge pelted painfully against my face, limiting my vision and forcing me at times to turn and walk backward under the protection of my parka's tightly drawn hood. Twice when I tried to stand upright and face the storm, I was knocked down by the wind. The only way to proceed now was by crouching and, on uncertain ground near the edges, crawling. It was exhilarating work, but with care never unsafe, since the onshore winds shoved me not toward destruction but away.

I came finally to the westernmost tip of the island, where the shore took the form of gravelly shelves stepping down to the sea, partially protected by house-sized boulders that stood in shallow water and bore the brunt of the waves. I crept as close as I dared, wedged myself into the shelter of a rock, and spent an hour trying in vain to judge the scale of a gargantuan scene. The numbers don't matter anyway: the breakers were huge, and when they hit the boulders, they exploded twice as high. The wind and the water roared. The moon came out briefly and lit the boiling surf. When I grew cold from sitting, I found my way back to the hotel. The walking was easy downwind.

In the morning the seas remained rough, but the rain had stopped, the winds had dropped to a paltry 50 miles an hour, and the ferry was reported to be running on schedule. It was the end of the storm, the natural moment to leave. I had a breakfast of black coffee, paid my hotel bill, and arranged for the taxi to deliver my suitcase to the ferry landing. The last hours I spent walking again—as you might want to as well, to enjoy the calm. The ferry departs for Brest at 4:30 P.M. and arrives by 7:00, which allows you to get to Paris in time to spend the night, and the next day, perhaps feeling invigorated, to resume ordinary life. ■



FOOD

SWEET AND INTENSE

The wine that made Ontario famous

BY CORBY KUMMER

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One Christmas I visited friends in Eltville, a town along the Rhine near Frankfurt known for its sweet and sparkling white wines—the kind that can be made in cool, damp climates. Like nearly everyone else in town, the family made a bit of wine as an expensive hobby. With nine children and their friends swirling in daily constellations, my friends inevitably fell behind on various chores. Still, I was surprised to see grapes hanging on the few trellised vines—not merely forgotten stalks but big bunches that had turned brown with the cold. Why waste the better part of a year's work?, I wondered. Winemaking equipment was sitting outside, barely protected. "We're going to make ice wine," one of the children told me. "After New Year's. Once it gets really cold."

When, a few years later, I became a devoted follower of sweet wines, I

learned that ice wine offers the sweetest, most intense concentration of grape flavor available in a bottle. It is one of the most peculiar, troublesome wines in the world to make. It also occupies a niche where the New World can successfully compete with the Old, by capitalizing on local climates and native grapes instead of fighting them.

Efforts to make drinkable wine in America were vexed from the start. Thomas Jefferson famously failed to coax European grapes into thriving at Monticello. Early explorers of the Americas took many fruits and vegetables to Europe, with such success that centuries later settlers imported them back (think of the tomato and the potato), but grapes were different. Jefferson and others who hoped to make wine in the Colonies dismissed as "foxy" the musty scent of native varieties such

as Concord and Catawba, familiar to schoolchildren as the flavor of grape jelly and to teenagers sneaking Manischewitz and Cold Duck. The English authority Jancis Robinson likens it to "a wet, cheap fur coat."

Only after the turn of the twentieth century, when Italian immigrants recognized that European wine grapes could thrive in the Mediterranean-like climate of northern California, and only after their descendants decided to go head-to-head with the great winemakers of France and Italy, did the wine world take the New World seriously. A few decades later another group of immigrants—Germans and Austrians in Ontario—saw that they, too, could turn a climate similar to the one they had left behind to their advantage.

Canada has lately taken to ice wine the way Napa and Sonoma did to cabernet, and for the same reason—ice wine has brought international prizes and big increases in sales to the Canadian wine industry, which labored for decades with little recognition. Canadian winemakers have re-animated a wine that had practically disappeared in its Northern European birthplace—and without denaturing it, as attempts to re-create foods and wines far from their homes often do.

I wish I'd been able to see my German friends make ice wine. Picking and crushing the grapes are activities as reminiscent of a folk tale as the Christmas traditions the family lovingly observes. The grapes must be picked on several of the coldest nights of the year, preferably by moonlight, and pressed outdoors before the rising sun can begin to melt them.

The Niagara Peninsula, which runs along Lake Ontario a few miles north of the U.S. border, is suited to cool-climate grapes. The lake stores summer heat and releases it into the cooling autumn air, permitting long ripening. It was in this area that a series of French hybrid grapes—so called because French viticulturists crossed Southern European varieties with native American ones that could withstand disease and the cold—were developed at the turn of the century. White grapes proved more successful

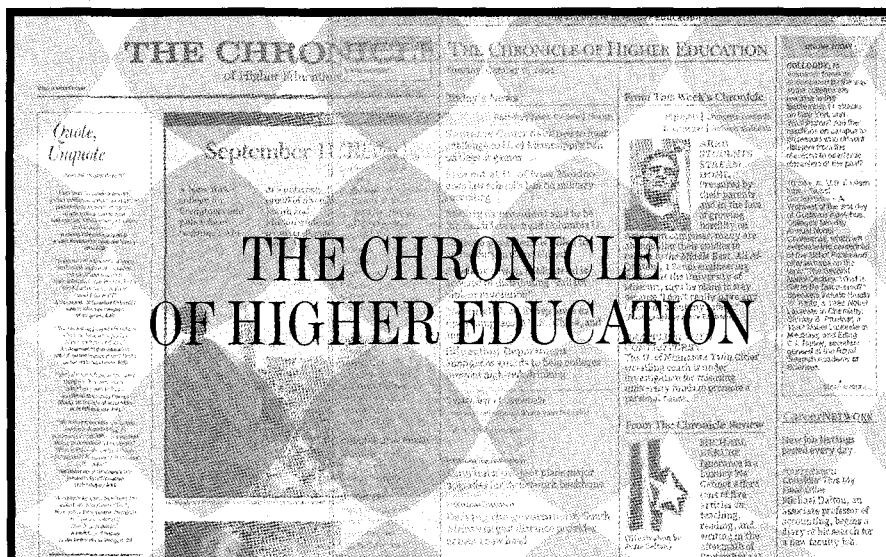
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than red, and the most highly adaptable variety was Vidal, a cross including the popular wine grape known in Italy as Trebbiano and in France as Ugni blanc. Vidal grapes are relatively high in acidity, a characteristic of most cool-climate white grapes and a quality needed to balance the sweetness of ice wine. They also have extremely tough skins—another necessity, to survive the cycle of freezing and thawing that grapes for ice wine must undergo.

Several winemakers on the peninsula, each with a German or an Austrian background, decided in the early 1980s that they were growing the right grapes and working in just the right conditions to produce ice wine. Maybe they could make a product to rival that of their homelands. Maybe they could make a better one. For a while they talked about the possibility, almost as a joke—something to do if the seemingly endless work in their young wineries ever left them with any time. Then, in 1983, they decided to leave a few rows of Vidal and Riesling vines unpicked in each of their vineyards and see them through several hard frosts. The harvest was over by late October, as usual, and the first hard frosts were due in early December—mild Novembers and suddenly cold Decembers are typical of the peninsula, and a good augury for ice wine. Then, on December 1, one of the winemakers lost his entire crop to starlings.

"I was in Rochester, at a wine conference," Karl Kaiser told me when I visited the peninsula last winter. "I got back at two, and there were no grapes. I asked our vineyard fellow, 'What happened? Did you guys pick it?'" Lesson One, then, was to net the vines soon after the October harvest.

Nine years earlier Kaiser, a big, balding, moustachioed man with a kindly, intelligent face, had joined forces with Donald Ziraldo to open the Inniskillin Winery. Kaiser, who was exposed to winemaking as a high school student in a Cistercian monastery boarding school in rural Austria, would be the winemaker; Ziraldo, born in Canada to immigrants from the Italian region of Friuli, would oversee the business and promotion. They bought a farm for the winery near Niagara-on-the-Lake, a picturesque

town eight miles north of Niagara Falls, and started making and selling several kinds of table wine. Ice wine began to seem like a good way to catch the attention of a world that remained uninterested in a newly ambitious industry.

Makers of sweet wines must concentrate the sugars and other flavor-giving substances in grapes. The ways of concentration are many, and the traditional ones rely on weather. In cool climates sun and warm air won't do the job. Instead vintners hope that insects (or birds, hail, or mildew) will bore tiny holes in the grape skins, to allow the entry of the fungus *botrytis cinerea*, called noble rot when vintners want it and bunch rot when they don't. If conditions are just right, the *botrytis* will concentrate the sugars while leaving the acid intact, resulting in honeyed tropical-fruit flavors. Waiting for the right rot is a big gamble, though, and one that frequently fails to pay off. That's why German late-harvest Rieslings, with their endless names (Beerenauslese, Trockenbeerenauslese), and Sauternes (of which Château d'Yquem is the ne plus ultra) are rare and costly.

The requirements for ice wine are much simpler: a couple of cold spells after a long ripening. Freeze-thaw cycles produce some of the same complexity that noble rot does—especially the overtones of peach and apricot and of tropical fruits such as mango and litchi (although not the honeyed quality, which is unique to *botrytis*). They also result in enormous concentration: a great deal of water is lost to the cold, dry air, and most of what remains is trapped in crystals when the grapes are picked.

The bunches go straight into the press, stems and all. What comes out is drops of syrup—the part of the grape highest in sugar and other flavors. Great force is necessary to extract these viscous drops: even today's powerful hydraulic presses, which typically press tons of grapes in an hour, take many hours to press a ton of frozen grapes. The yield is just one fifth of the juice that normally harvested grapes would provide.

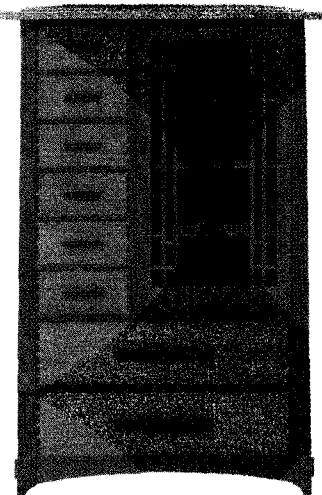
In the first years of their experiments the Niagara Peninsula winemakers more or less guessed which night to pick the grapes. Then they became

slightly more scientific. "I have a digital display thermometer in my bedroom," Klaus Reif, of the Reif Estate Winery, told me during an ice-wine festival in a fancy hotel beside the Niagara Falls casino. "When it's cold enough, we call everyone. We don't do it night after night, because that's too hard on people." At first winery workers drawn by the novelty volunteered for the night harvests. Then ice wine caught on. Every peninsula winery began producing one, and vintners had to find a core of workers who could do a full night's work on no notice and who were prepared to dress extremely warmly, down to their (usually bare) fingertips.

The allure of moonlight on snow-covered vines proved strong, and wineries are now in the unexpected position of fending off civilian volunteers. Klaus Reif sees why. "You start at midnight and work until eight," he told me. "It's ten to fourteen degrees, and with the wind chill it feels like thirty below. But it's amazing. People don't talk. They work along, quiet and peaceful. Some nights there's a snow layer and a full moon, and you hardly need any light. It's an awesome feeling."

The turning point for Canadian ice wine—and, it could be argued, for the Canadian wine industry—was a grand prize given in 1991 to a 1989 Inniskillin ice wine at Vinexpo, in Bordeaux, the largest annual trade show. No Canadian wine had ever before received anything like it. Inniskillin has gone from producing sixty-six cases in 1984, its first year, to 12,000 cases last year. In 1998 Ontario sold double the number of cases that Germany did.

Wineries south of the border have shown surprisingly little inclination to duplicate Canada's success. Although the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York has conditions very like Ontario's, Kaiser told me that he has encountered just one New York ice wine, and it was made from grapes harvested in October and stuck in the freezer. (This would not be allowed under the strict Canadian regulations that recently won Canada entry into the European market.) By far the most popular ice wine made in this country is made the same way, in Cali-



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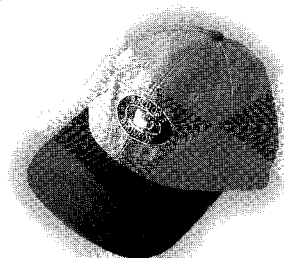
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fornia: the eccentric and erudite Randall Grahm's Vin de Glaciere. Grahm puts several kinds of Muscat grapes straight into the freezer before pressing them. Santa Cruz, where he makes wine, is not known for magic moonlight on snow-dusted vineyards.

Although Grahm's wine is not made by authentic methods ("*glaciere*" means "ice box"; Grahm changed the name from Vin de Glace, or "Ice Wine," after the U.S. government pointed out that he was cheating), it does have a welcome balance of sweetness and acidity. The many tastes I had of Vidal ice wines, by far the most popular kind, did not. They seemed monochromatic and too sweet. I longed for the delicacy and acid notes of late-harvest Riesling, or the sheer deliciousness and pear overtones of my favorite sweet wine, the lightly effervescent Moscato d'Asti.

I found some of these qualities when Kaiser took me through a tasting of several recent Inniskillin ice-wine vintages—after a while, that is. There were a few innovations best discarded—for example, oak-aged Vidal, which tasted weirdly smoky (botrytis wines benefit from wood aging, but frozen grapes don't). There were experiments with varieties I did not find congenial, among them ice wine made from red Cabernet franc grapes: Kaiser spoke proudly of the "pure fruit," but it tasted to me like mildly alcoholic grape syrup. And I never came to love Vidal ice wine, even though it is the flagship Niagara Peninsula wine and wins competition after competition. "I say that it has lipstick," Kaiser told me, half in apology. "The acidity in Riesling is much pointier."

Happily, many Niagara wineries do make Riesling ice wine, which, unlike Germanic late-harvest Rieslings, does not require botrytis (notable makers include Konzelmann, Reif, and Malivoire). Kaiser poured me a few of his, and then came to the revelation: sparkling ice wine. The sparkle is natural, he explained. The wine is fermented in steel tanks, not bottles, much like Moscato d'Asti. The flavor was bright and refreshing. This is by far the nicest way to drink a next-to-native grape, and a way to persuade even the sugar-averse that ice wine is something to treasure. ▀

DELFINA*Restaurants worth building a trip around*

BY CORBY KUMMER

.....

It's the only new place that tastes "Right," Carol Field, a novelist and writer of authoritative books on Italian food, told me one late-August morning at the Saturday San Francisco farmers' market—foodie central in a food-crazed city. "Right" is foodie code for "really good," so I made sure to dine at Delfina twice on that trip. I saw why Field, a longtime friend, thought it could be mentioned in the same breath as our Bay Area trinity of Chez Panisse, Oliveto, and Zuni Café: Delfina has their simplicity, basic Italian vocabulary, and desire to show off what's local and freshest. It also has the low prices that those restaurants had before they became landmarks.

Delfina now occupies two storefronts (it expanded last February) on a neat block in the Mission District that retains some 1960s Haight funk even as it undergoes the transformation that has revived the adjoining area known as South of Market. It's next door to the Lady Baltimore Cake Co., an unreconstructed 1960s bakery whose high layer cakes might well have inspired the artist Wayne Thiebaud, and near the Bi-Rite Market, a combination general and grocery store whose second-generation owner has restored it to its streamlined 1940s splendor.

The decor of the restaurant is industrial modern on a budget, with wooden benches, brushed-steel tabletops, and light-yellow walls exhibiting changing displays of art. The hard surfaces and continual crowds make for loud dining, especially in the original half, which has a pleasant bar near the open kitchen; the second storefront, which doubled the seating capacity to seventy, has the audial if not visual blessing of industrial gray quilting along the top of one wall. The best place to sit is at the long counter in the new room, which offers views of the

other diners and what they're eating and also, by means of a tilted mirror under the quilt, a good view of kitchen activities.

Other friends warned me of long waits and indifferent service—the price of Delfina's great popularity since it opened, three years ago. Before each of my dinners there I called in the afternoon and got a (late) reservation. I found the young, informal staff members, who sport the tattoos and body ornaments typical of the neighborhood, to be friendly, knowledgeable, and free of the arrogance that often typifies a hot-ticket place.

Delfina's menu is short and printed daily, sparing everyone the recitation of specials. It changed substantially over the three August nights I was in San Francisco, demonstrating the chef's close attention to what comes available each morning. But several dishes never go off the menu, and when I tasted them, I understood why. One is an appetizer of grilled fresh calamari with warm white-bean salad, a common enough dish but unusually good in this case—less for the fresh squid (I live in Boston, where it's easy to come by) than for the white beans, seasoned with local sage and garlic. I liked the homemade lamb sausage with pickled onions, too—especially for the tiny flageolet beans to the side, celadon-green Chiclets shapes with the delicate flavor of baby limas. Another standard is roast chicken (served with mashed Yukon gold potatoes and shiitake mushrooms), a contender, together with Zuni's version, for the city's best, and for similar reasons—good locally raised chicken, heavy use of herbs, and expert roasting. Then there's the price: \$12.00.

The menu fixture I would happily eat every night is a salad of bitter greens, pancetta, walnuts, and Parmigiano-

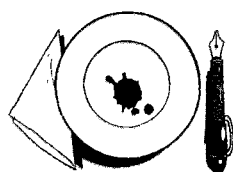
Reggiano cheese. The peppery greens are maroon-accented with shredded radicchio, the toasted walnuts are almost as meaty as the locally cured pancetta, and the balsamic vinaigrette is as creamy as an old-fashioned boiled dressing. I would also take a chance on any pasta dish, given the full, immediate flavor of the two I tried: soft fresh tagliarini tossed with summer squash and squash blossoms, and al dente spaghetti with plum tomatoes, garlic, and chili flakes.

The wines, most of them Californian or Italian, are reasonably priced, with a good selection by the glass. I considered it part of experiencing the local culture to try the Cold Heaven viognier, from the Edna Valley, which offers the full, fruity body people want in Chardonnay without the boring oak. A better match with most of the menu, though, is the spicy Schuetz Oles zinfandel, from the Napa Valley. The desserts are plain and very tempting: a buttermilk panna cotta, for example, and a lattice-topped plum tart with deep-purple juices bubbling over dark strips of pastry.

Many chefs try dishes like these, but they don't have the skill of Delfina's chef, Craig Stoll, who worked for a time in Italy but trained mostly in Bay Area restaurants. One of the tricks he took from Italy is sautéing pasta for a minute or two with its sauce and final ingredients before sending it out (those mirrors give a *very* good view of the stoves). He naturally absorbed the Bay Area ethos of buying from local farms—an ethos that emanated from Chez Panisse and that I wish pervaded the entire country, not just a few enlightened pockets.

Delfina's success has already been a local inspiration. Stoll and his partner and wife, Anne Stoll, opened their restaurant "on credit cards," a talented young chef named Tasha Prysi told me during my stay, with a starry, I-can-do-it-too light in her eyes. I hope she does follow their example, soon—and in a less blessed city. ▀

Delfina, 3621 Eighteenth Street, San Francisco, 415-552-4055. Dinner 5:30–10:00 Sunday through Thursday and until 11:00 Friday and Saturday. Reservations and Visa and MasterCard accepted.



DELFINA
SAN FRANCISCO

PORTRAIT OF A WOMAN AS A YOUNG BOXER

Rosalie Parker began boxing before it became a chic female sport

BY DANIEL BOYNE

.....

There was something very odd and yet entirely captivating about watching the boxer's hands get wrapped before a fight. Perhaps it had something to do with the delicacy with which the trainer, Devon Cormack, wound the white gauze around the wrist and then the metacarpals. When these were partly covered, he tore off three short pieces from the roll and strung them between the fingers. He pulled the strips longitudinally, toward the wrist; they would support it like a splint when they were wound firmly into the body of the wrap.

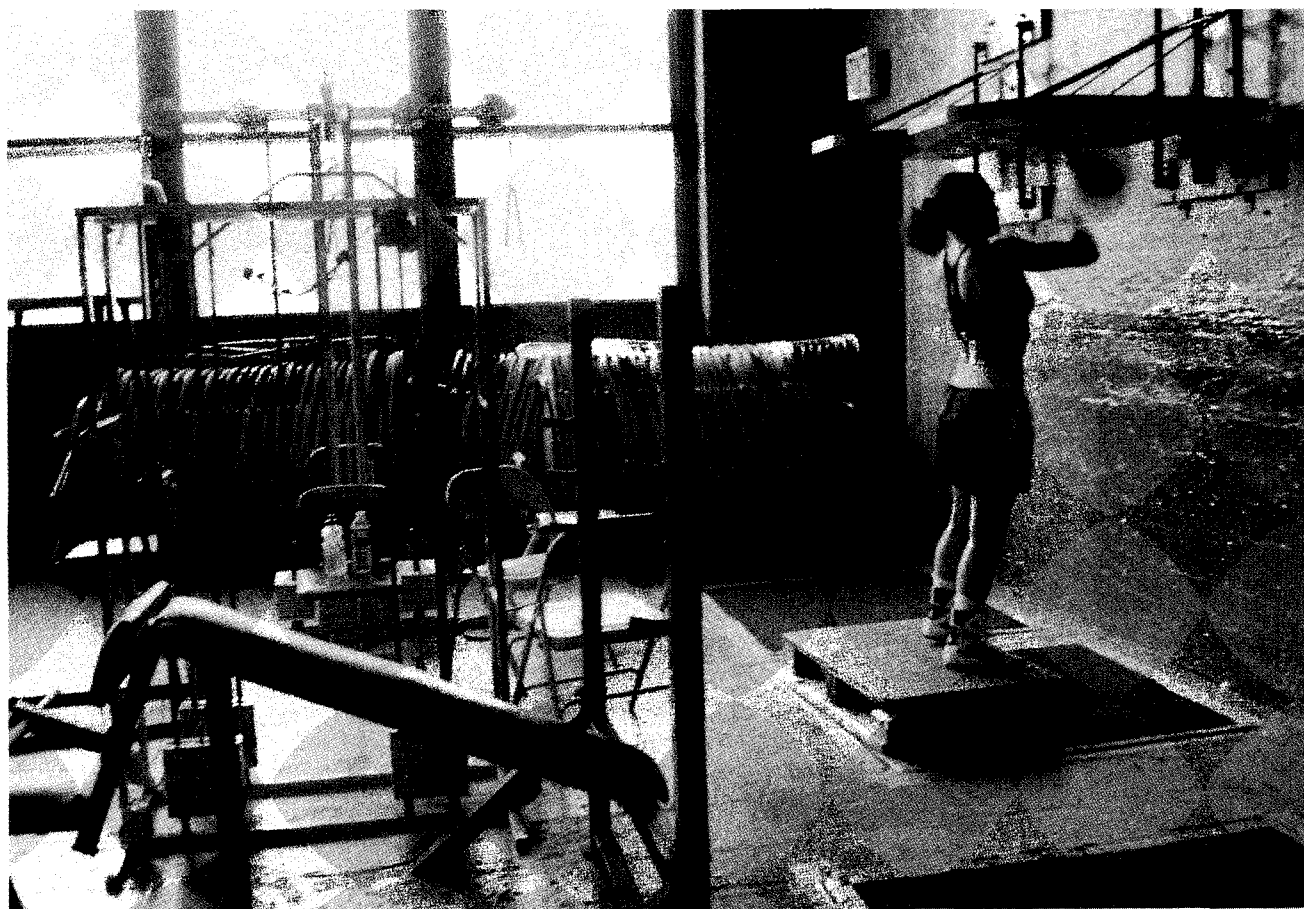
It was the summer of 2000, and I was in a makeshift boxing venue: the basketball court of a recreation center in Augusta, Georgia. A regulation-size boxing ring had been set up in the middle of the room, and folding bleachers

had been pulled out from the walls. A few dozen chairs sat closer to ringside, with seats for five judges placed directly around the perimeter. Attendance was modest—mostly friends and family of the boxers. On the back wall hung a poster from a local restaurant, Malley's Bagel and Grits, and kids from the Augusta Boxing Club were selling raffle tickets and wearing T-shirts that said I'D RATHER SWEAT IN THE GYM THAN BLEED IN THE STREETS.

Devon was almost finished with the pair of hands I had been watching him wrap. An amiable Jamaican, he is one of the best kickboxers in the world in three weight classes; training amateur boxers is only a sideline for him. He explained a little about what he was doing as he worked, but after he stopped to redo one of the hands, I

let him finish the job in silence. His long dreadlocks hung still as his eyes focused on the small hand in front of him. The wrapping seemed to embody one of the contradictions of the sport: a wrap serves not only to protect the hand but also to make it more dangerous. Because this was an amateur bout, Devon explained, he couldn't use anything other than soft gauze and a single, final turn of adhesive tape. The pros use a much more substantial wrap, and the gladiators of Roman Coliseum days bound their fists with studded leather straps—one good punch and it was all over.

My fascination with the wrapping had something to do with the particular pair of hands in front of me, which belonged to a young woman named Rosalie Parker. She was the match favorite—the reigning flyweight champ and the winner of the 2000 U.S. Nationals. She was also a Harvard graduate who had recently held down a job in mergers and acquisitions at PricewaterhouseCoopers. Standing five feet two and weighing 112 pounds, Parker was about to step into



PEDRO ABREU

the ring and try to defend the National Golden Gloves flyweight crown.

Her hands ready, Parker donned her headgear and tightened her kidney-and-waist protector. Among the last things to go on were the eight-ounce competition gloves, which laced halfway up her forearms and turned them into two small clubs. An official watched her put them on to make sure there was no tampering. After he had parted the ropes and stepped into the ring, the referee checked to make sure that both fighters were wearing chest protectors. When he approached Parker's corner, she tapped her gloves against her chest, showing that she was covered underneath her sleeveless black shirt. The two fighters went to the middle of the ring and touched gloves. Then they retreated to their corners and waited nervously for the bell to ring. Devon held out Parker's mouth guard and fed it to her—the final piece of protective gear.

Under the mouth guard were two gold false fronts, on Parker's left front tooth and the incisor next to it. They were a special good-luck charm that she had had made less than a year before, to help psych herself up for the fights and perhaps to intimidate some opponents.

Moments earlier I had seen a dramatic shift in the behavior of Parker and her opponent. As they warmed up physically, they also began to assume their fighting personas. Conversation was minimal, and they paced around like race horses approaching the starting gate, their faces drained of emotion. They avoided making eye contact, as if they were saving their visual focus for the fight. Randomly they began to make short, jerky movements with their heads, shoulders, and arms. They looked as if they were entering a trance.

The fight itself went by in a blur, three short rounds during which Parker and her opponent battled each other indecisively. None of their punches seemed to have much impact. The match was like an odd, unsynchronized dance, with neither partner able to decide who was going to take the lead. In the end, however, the judges gave the fight to

Parker's opponent, causing the audience to boo in disapproval. As a novice observer, I couldn't tell who should have won. Then I began to get an education.

Much ado has been made recently about women's boxing, particularly now that Muhammad Ali's daughter, Laila, has entered the ring. Books and movies have suddenly appeared, and hybrid offshoots of the sport, such as the "cardio-boxing" being taught at health clubs and featured in various women's magazines, have proliferated. Pre-teen clothing catalogues are now selling T-shirts that say GIRL BOXING. Although much of this is pure marketing hype, there is a growing group of women who take boxing quite seriously.

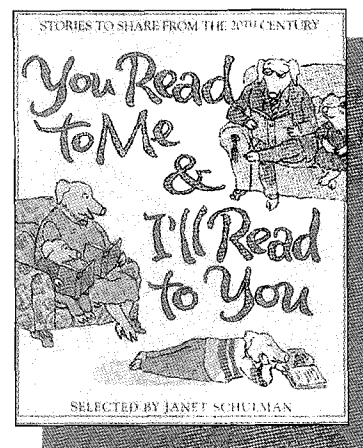
Rosalie Parker began boxing in 1994, before it had become chic, before women had secured a clear path on which to pursue the sport. Back when she was an undergraduate, she wandered over to the Harvard Boxing Club one day to see what it was all about. There she met Tommy Rawson, an eighty-six-year-old ex-fighter from East Boston who had coached at the university for more than fifty years. It was her sophomore year, and she wanted to try something new. Although the Harvard Boxing Club was open to women, few had ever shown up, and none had stayed for long; there was something a little daunting about going there alone. After dragging her roommate along for a few sessions, Parker ended up as the sole regular female participant, though she wasn't the first woman to have entered the club.

Rawson was very reluctant to let her actually spar with the men. He had worked with a few women before, and had discovered that they generally picked up the classic movements of boxing with greater ease and coordination than most men did. Still, his feeling was that women were meant "to be loved, not beaten up." As a result, he had Parker spend a lot of time learning and refining the stances, punches, and footwork of the art. Rawson drilled her in the basics for almost the entire year, while she enviously watched the guys pair off for sparring practice—but she was becoming fit, fast, and nimble.

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In addition to learning punching technique and footwork, she ran, skipped rope, and pummeled a heavy bag. Earlier that year she had injured her knee, and had vowed to take better care of it. The hard lateral movements required for ice hockey, tennis, and rugby—sports she already played—might do damage to the healing knee, so she stuck with boxing, despite the rather repetitive exercises. Little did she know that she would proceed to stress-fracture bones in her hands by repeatedly hitting the heavy bag.

During her junior year in college she spent some time abroad and then came back to boxing when she returned to Harvard. At this point she really wanted to fight, and she sought out a coach who would train her to step into the ring. Finding a coach willing to take on a woman wasn't easy. Frustrated, she posted a note on the Internet asking for help locating a coach; this ultimately led her to the Boston Sport Boxing Club, in Watertown.

ponent—to start swinging hard at the sound of the bell.

Parker eventually moved on to the Somerville Boxing Club, where she met Norman "Stony" Stone—a trainer who had worked with several nationally ranked fighters, including John Ruiz (who recently gained prominence by taking the heavyweight crown away from Evander Holyfield). Again, walking into what was basically a men's club was intimidating, and the process of proving herself worthy as a boxer took some time. When she told Stone that she wanted to get good enough to win the Golden Gloves, he agreed to work with her, though he had never before actively trained a female fighter.

Parker's first official competitive appearance came at the New England regional championships in 1996, but because there were no other women in the flyweight class, she had to move up and fight as a featherweight. Inexperienced and outweighed, she lost her first outing.

Parker was a brawler, someone who could take a hit and keep coming back. She liked to start swinging hard at the sound of the bell.

A real boxing club was more intimidating to Parker than the genteel club at Harvard. As she describes it, "There were a lot of tattoos, Spanish, and prison records." Needless to say, just entering the club took a rare kind of courage. And if Parker felt odd and out of place in the gym, the regulars were sometimes equally ill at ease in her presence. The club was frequented largely by working-class men who didn't quite know how to treat a young woman from Harvard. Some thought she might be there just to pick up guys; others wanted to pick her up. In any case, respect came slowly, until the other fighters and the trainers began to realize that Parker's intentions were indeed serious.

After working with the fitness trainer at the gym, Parker was taken on by Dave Sullivan, a real fight trainer, who soon began sparring with her. From the start she was a brawler, someone who could take a hit and keep coming back. She liked to take the fight to her op-

Her next competition was the regional Golden Gloves, held in Lowell, Massachusetts. It was a serious amateur affair, with thousands in the audience. Parker boxed in the bantamweight class, at 119 pounds, seven pounds heavier than her ideal fighting weight—but at the end of three rounds, when the judges' cards were compared, she had won on every card.

For the average male fighter, winning a regional Golden Gloves title is the first step toward becoming a successful amateur boxer. After Parker won, however, Norman Stone told her that she should retire. He pointed out that there were plenty of other ways to prove herself. And besides, there was very little else for her to do in boxing.

"You're a smart girl," he said. "You should get on with your life."

After graduation, in 1997, Parker took a job in mergers and acquisitions at Wasserstein Perella & Co. A year and a half later she joined Price-

waterhouseCoopers and moved to Paris. There she found a small athletic club in the ninth arrondissement, where she began to box again. Many of the fighters there were from North Africa, Muslims who were taken aback by the presence of a woman in their gym, let alone one who wanted to box. But Parker's persistent, bright-eyed manner eventually won them over. The fact that she was an American helped, because they had come to accept American women as an entirely different breed.

The next winter she moved to New York City and started thinking about competing again. She had always wanted to go to Gleason's, in Brooklyn, one of the best-known and oldest boxing gyms in the country. A host of famous boxers had trained there, from Jake LaMotta (the "Raging Bull") to Larry Holmes. It took Parker a full week just to get up the courage to go, and when she finally did, the scene that unfolded before her was something out of another world. Gleason's had four rings containing all manner of combatants, from amateur boxers to professional wrestlers. It was, for her, an instant delight, both exotic and exhilarating. She had called ahead to introduce herself and to express her wish to come and train, and it was at Gleason's that she met Colin Morgan, a trainer with whom she seemed to click from the start. A soft-spoken Guyanese, Morgan was coaching a stable of boxers from the West Indies, many of whom were as bighearted and as encouraging as he, their broad smiles displaying an array of gold teeth.

Morgan decided that Parker should train for the 2000 Nationals, which would be held in Midland, Texas. In preparation for the fight he tried to refine her style and tone down her tendency to brawl. Under his tutelage she worked harder than ever before, and became very fond of her coach. The gold fronts for her two teeth are a tribute to Morgan's smile.

When Parker entered the staging area before the big fight in Texas, she looked less like a Harvard graduate than like a street tough from New York City. Her hair was drawn back and covered by a nylon do-rag. Along with the gold teeth, she wore a tank top to display her well-

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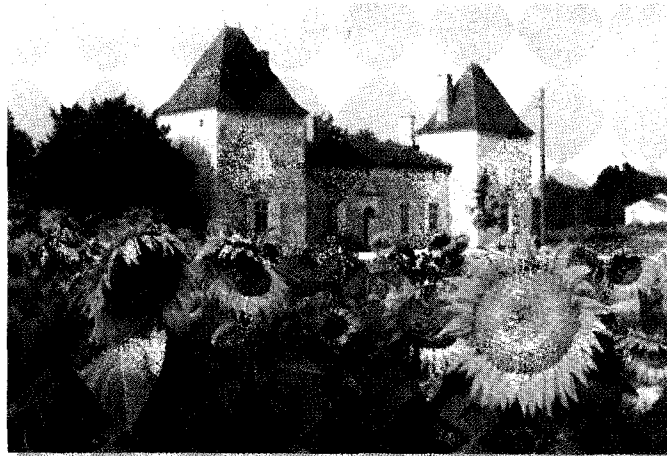
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defined upper arms. It was all part of the pre-fight posturing, meant to intimidate her opponent. As Parker had discovered, the boxing arena is not a place where college degrees count for much.

In the ring, despite Morgan's advice, Parker began punching furiously as soon as the bell rang. Shorter than her opponent, and with a correspondingly shorter reach, she was trying desperately to get inside, but she knew she couldn't sustain her intensity for long. Fortunately, she didn't have to. She was much stronger than her opponent and proceeded to take her apart in a nonstop barrage of punch combinations. The fight lasted three rounds; the referee twice stepped in to prevent the other boxer from getting seriously hurt. The next day the recap on ESPN described the match this way: "Rosalie Parker, out of the famous Gleason's Gym, came in throwing punches ... and just kept firing."

"That was *terrible*!" Morgan said teasingly, as they sat together review-

sphere of a boxing arena, although the intensity of the performers was equally engrossing. Yo-Yo Ma was accompanied by two virtuosos: the fiddler Mark O'Connor and the bassist Edgar Meyer. Between pieces the cellist chatted with the audience about his passion, at one point talking about what he called "the edge effect" in music, when disparate elements converge to create unexpected contrasts.

Parker sat in the audience, listening intently. Her hair was wavy but carefully combed, and her dress was at once elegant and flamboyant, expressing equal parts of her personality. In a way, I thought, she was the physical embodiment of that very "edge effect" that Yo-Yo Ma had just been describing. By the concert's end Parker had removed the blue shawl from her shoulders, and for a whimsical moment she wrapped it around her head and face, like a Muslim woman. Her arms were finally bared for the well-bred audience to see, but she seemed unabashed.

After Parker had won her first title, her coach told her she should retire. "You're a smart girl," he said. "You should get on with your life."

ing a video of the fight. "I know," Parker admitted. She explained that she had simply been too nervous. It was, after all, only her third real bout. She knew that Morgan was very pleased nevertheless. "When two fighters are equal in strength," he had once told her, "always bet on the brawler to win."

Two weeks after winning the national title, Parker was back in Boston, attending a Yo-Yo Ma performance at her alma mater. Her parents, both local physicians, were there, and her mother had brought along a blue shawl for her to wear. Parker wore an iridescent silk dress with spaghetti straps that fully exposed her upper arms, which looked chiseled from all of her training in the gym. "My mother thinks I've gotten too muscular," she confided to me, draping the shawl over her shoulders.

The concert, held in the intimate confines of Sanders Theatre, presented a wonderful contrast to the raucous atmo-

About three months later, watching her hands get wrapped for the Golden Gloves fight in Augusta, I remembered this final image of her at the concert. I kept it in mind as I watched her narrowly lose the fight but remain unruffled by the judges' decision. When I asked her how she felt about the loss, she shrugged and explained that it was all part of the sport. It was good, she said, to learn what judges look for when a match is close. Instead of dwelling on her defeat, she was preoccupied with finding out exactly how well she had fought and how she could do better. It was then that I realized that for Parker boxing was truly an art. Like a musician or an actor, she was constantly honing her technique, trying to find a sense of style. Boxing wasn't merely a matter of winning and losing for her—it was a unique form of expression that allowed her to put herself in a different state of mind, put her body on the line, and emerge with a new sense of what is possible. ■

PIXELS AT AN EXHIBITION

It may be time to take a closer look at digital photography

BY MARSHALL JON FISHER

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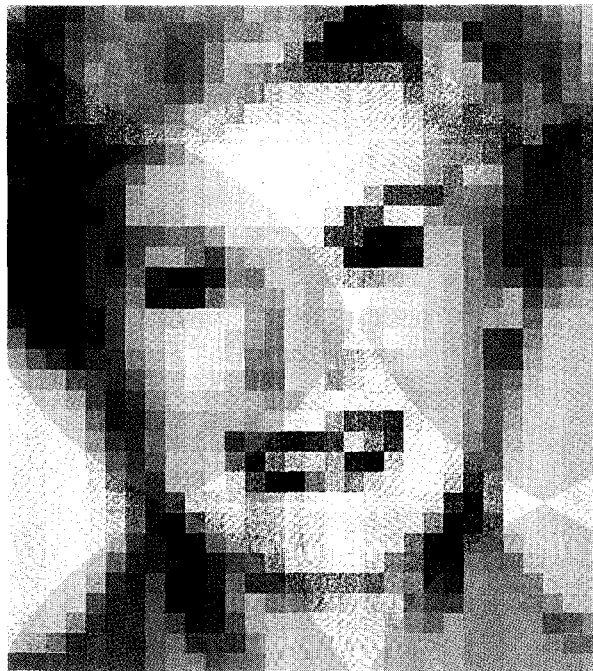
Over the past two decades a digital juggernaut has run through the cultural landscape, leaving the old analog ruling class trampled in its wake. In the 1980s word processors took the place of typewriters, and CDs replaced LP records. In the 1990s personal computers took over offices, even home offices, and e-mail all but relegated letter writing to history. Television went digital too—in theory, at least—as the Federal Communications Commission rolled out a timetable for the conversion of U.S. television to digital by 2006. Most people still watch analog TV, but there seems to be little doubt that it will soon go the way of the typewriter and the LP.

More surprising than the pertinacity of sixty-year-old television technology a decade after the development of digital TV is the endurance of film photography. Converting the country to digital television requires a multibillion-dollar effort on the part of broadcasters, manufacturers, and viewers, roughly simultaneously. Digital cameras, though, have flooded the market, work beautifully, and pay for themselves, because you no longer have to keep buying film and getting it developed. Many people wanting to make the switch have been waiting until the resolution offered by digital cameras is equal to that of film. This year, if it hadn't already, the digital greyhound finally caught the rabbit.

Digital images, like other computer files, are simply information. The more information your camera captures, the better the resolution you get. Resolution is measured in pixels—"picture elements," the tiny dots that make up any digital image—or, usually, megapixels (millions of pixels). This year the major digital-camera manufacturers brought out consumer models that cost less than \$1,000 and produce images of roughly four megapixels—more precisely, from 3.3 to 4.2. "Three-point-three megapixels basically means you can print out a good eight-by-ten photo," David Brommer, a

digital specialist at B&H Photo Video, in New York City, told me. "But how many people print eight-by-tens, even with film? Most people print for their album; for that, as well as for e-mailing photos or uploading to Web pages, a three-hundred-dollar two-megapixel camera is great."

Indeed, digital cameras allow you to do much more than fill a photo album. You can send photos over the Internet; post them on Web pages; give "slide" shows on a computer, a TV set, or a



digital projector; and use your computer to incorporate photos into greeting cards (printed or e-mailed) and other documents. Many models now also allow you to make short video clips, which add a remarkably pleasing touch to a slide show.

The Nikon Coolpix 995, the Olympus C-3040Z, and the Canon PowerShot G2 are among the top four-megapixel cameras costing \$800 to \$900, according to Brommer. Each features a liquid-crystal display for immediate viewing of photos, a zoom lens, a fairly wide aperture range, high ISO speeds, and

shutter speeds up to at least 1/800 of a second. For less money there are many two-to-three-megapixel cameras to choose from. For analyses and comparisons of digital cameras, see dpreview.com, consumersearch.com, or consumerreports.org.

When I visited Studio Two, a graphic-design business in Lenox, Massachusetts, I saw what six megapixels can do. Kevin Sprague, a co-founder of Studio Two, converted to digital two years ago, when Nikon came out with the D1, a \$5,000 three-megapixel professional single-lens-reflex camera that looks and operates very much like Nikon's popular F series of regular SLR cameras, and even uses the same line of lenses. Now Sprague shoots with the D1X, the D1's six-megapixel successor. A *Coriolanus* poster for the theater group Shakespeare & Company; a shot of Rolf Smedvig playing his trumpet in a summer garden for a CD cover; a lineup of whiskey bottles for a restaurant ad: you could never guess the digital origin of Studio Two's work.

"Students learning photography today should buy digital cameras and never look back," Sprague told me. "By the time they're out of school, no one will be shooting film commercially." Richard J. Linke, a professor of art at Skidmore College, went ahead and converted the school's entire photography studio to digital two years ago. "I thought it would be irresponsible not to," he told me recently. "I had to decide whether to retire an old foggy or learn the way of the future, and it's been a real, revolutionary thrill."

Many experts, however, told me they didn't think the average consumer was ready for digital. "I don't think I'd recommend a digital camera for the soccer mom," Brommer said. "If you like to make prints and put them in an album,

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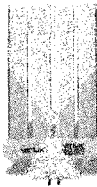
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at this point you're better off buying a roll of film, getting it developed, and you have your four-by-sixes." Sprague said, "My wife complains when I bring my D1 on family trips. She knows she'll never see the pictures. They're all here on my hard drive in the office."

I was surprised to hear such objections. Nudged into the twenty-first century by a holiday gift, I have been shooting exclusively digitally since January of 2000. And though I am far from a computer maven, and pack only 2.5 megapixels, I have found digital photography to be a great boon. I'm guessing it will soon become as vital a parenting tool as the VCR.

For those who want prints to paste into an album, Epson offers the Stylus Photo 785EPX ink-jet printer (\$249), which can print high-quality 4x6 photos directly from most cameras' storage disks, without even using a computer. Other such printers are sure to follow. But I prefer to present my photos in slide shows on my computer or by e-mail. My shots already look far more impressive on my twenty-one-inch screen than they do on paper, and they'll look even better as computer monitors grow larger and flatter and eventually merge with digital TV. Albums of 4x6s will come more and more to look like relics of a bygone age.

I find, too, that the instant feedback I get from digital photography is invaluable. I can reshoot a particular scene until I get the right exposure or smile, without wasting film or waiting for it to come back from the lab. As Linke pointed out to me, I'm more likely to get that good shot in the first place with a digital camera, because it captures a greater range of brightness than a traditional camera does. That is, two faces, one lit more brightly than the other, have a better chance of coming out well together in a digital photograph. "Digital is much more forgiving than even color negative film," Linke says. And when the contrasts between light and dark are just too strong, you can use Adobe Photoshop to lighten up the darker section or even to patch together sections of several shots taken at different f-stops. I don't like to spend much of my free time on the computer, but even quick and

simple tasks—cropping to remedy poor composition, for example—can make a big difference.

When I extol the virtues of digital photography to my friends, they sometimes object that computer files are too perishable or easily lost. But my family photos are much safer as computer files than they would be as pieces of paper and negative film. Each month or two I copy my entire photo collection onto all three computers in our home in a few seconds, and I also occasionally back up the archive onto a CD and leave it at a relative's house. If my house should ever burn down, all my twentieth-century photos and negatives will vanish, but my digital collection will survive in the form of perfect copies.

Another fear people have is that their pictures will someday be about as accessible as the diary they wrote fifteen years ago in PeachText. But the problem of obsolescence that plagued early word-processing programs has been obviated by the dominance of Microsoft Word. In the same way, the universal use of JPEG as the file format for digital photography provides assurance. Just as no word-processing program that doesn't easily convert to and from Word can possibly succeed, no imaging software that doesn't read JPEG could survive a day in the marketplace.

Not only does digital photography provide greater security than film, but it's actually cheaper. Sprague's \$5,000 Nikon paid for itself in three months of saved film and processing costs, and the same principle applies for the family shutterbug. If you shoot a roll of film a month, a \$300 digital camera will pay for itself in two years.

But to me, the greatest advantage is being able to take as many shots as I want. (There is a limit, of course, but a high one. I carry two 32MB SmartMedia disks, which together afford me 110 high-quality shots before I have to download to the computer and start again. The escalation of megapixels means larger file sizes, but surely the storage media will keep pace.) A professional photographer I once worked with told me that the main difference between a pro and an amateur is the number of rolls he

shoots; he was being modest, but the freedom to take more photos is bound to result in better ones.

This newfound blessing can also be a curse, though. A quarter century ago Susan Sontag argued that amateur photographers, "compelled to put the camera between themselves and whatever is remarkable that they encounter," often miss out on true experiences. In the digital age, without the palliative effect of film costs, the syndrome intensifies. The digital photographer finds himself trying to turn every vista, every Wiffle ball swing, into pixels. Hordes of photo and video files invade my hard drive each month, demanding cropping, filing, printing. I sometimes wonder if we human beings are evolving into bipedal electronic circuitry whose function is to record our entire, if ever less fulfilling, lives. But when I see my little boy grinning out at me from my monitor, digital cameras seem less doomful. And after all, restraint, along with the vigilant deleting of outtake files, is still an option.

In any case, whether or not the digital revolution is salubrious, there's no stopping it. I harbor a great fondness for typewriters and fountain pens, LP records and wooden tennis rackets. But for the most part I write on a computer, listen to CDs, and swing an oversized piece of fiberglass. I have made the switch to digital photography with even less regret: the advantages simply drown out the nostalgia. And the way computer technology escalates, hitherto-unheard-of megapixel levels will soon reach the low end of the market. Inevitably, within a few years people clinging to film will be like those audiophiles still spinning LPs today.

Digital television won't make its 2006 date with destiny, but it will probably supplant analog TV by the end of the decade. One of these days that long-promised six-foot flat digital screen will be hanging on your family-room wall. When it is, you'll be glad to have a substantial archive of digital photographs to present, in a slide show that compares to—actually, is far superior to—your father's Ektachrome version. There's no longer any reason not to take the leap into digital waters. Come on in; the information's fine. ■

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BOOKS & CRITICS

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A QUIET GENIUS

*Alice Munro is the living writer most likely
to be read in a hundred years*

BY MONA SIMPSON

.....

Most living writers are not, most of the time, reading one another's work. They are reconsidering the classics. They are consuming cookbooks, comics, self-help manuals, mysteries, pornography, Martha Stewart (a variety

of pornography for women).

They are skimming biographies, dabbling in dictionaries. Writers are watching *The Sopranos* or learning,

late in life, to play

tennis. They are obsessing about their love affairs, their disappointing careers, their children.

Every once in a while, though, a rumor burns through the tentative, decentralized community of American writers that a certain book must be owned. *Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage*, a new collection by Alice Munro, her tenth, has already incited writers to call one another on the telephone, to send e-mail exhortations, and—in the extreme (writers are not profligate)—to pay retail for more than one copy in order to give the book away.

Every artist, brilliant, pretty good, or aspiring, has the same wish—to make something beautiful and lasting—and the concomitant capacity for awe in the presence of the “serene achievement” (as Conrad called Henry James’s New York Editions). The highest compliment a critic can pay a short-story writer is to say that he or she is our Chekhov. More than one writer has made that claim for Alice Munro.

Her genius, like Chekhov’s, is quiet and particularly hard to describe, be-

cause it has the simplicity of the best naturalism, in that it seems not translated from life but, rather, like life itself. In analyzing another Russian writer’s transparent straightforwardness, James Wood described the crit-

ic’s frustration: “Why are his characters so real? Because they are so individual. Why does his world feel so true? Because it is so real. And so on.”

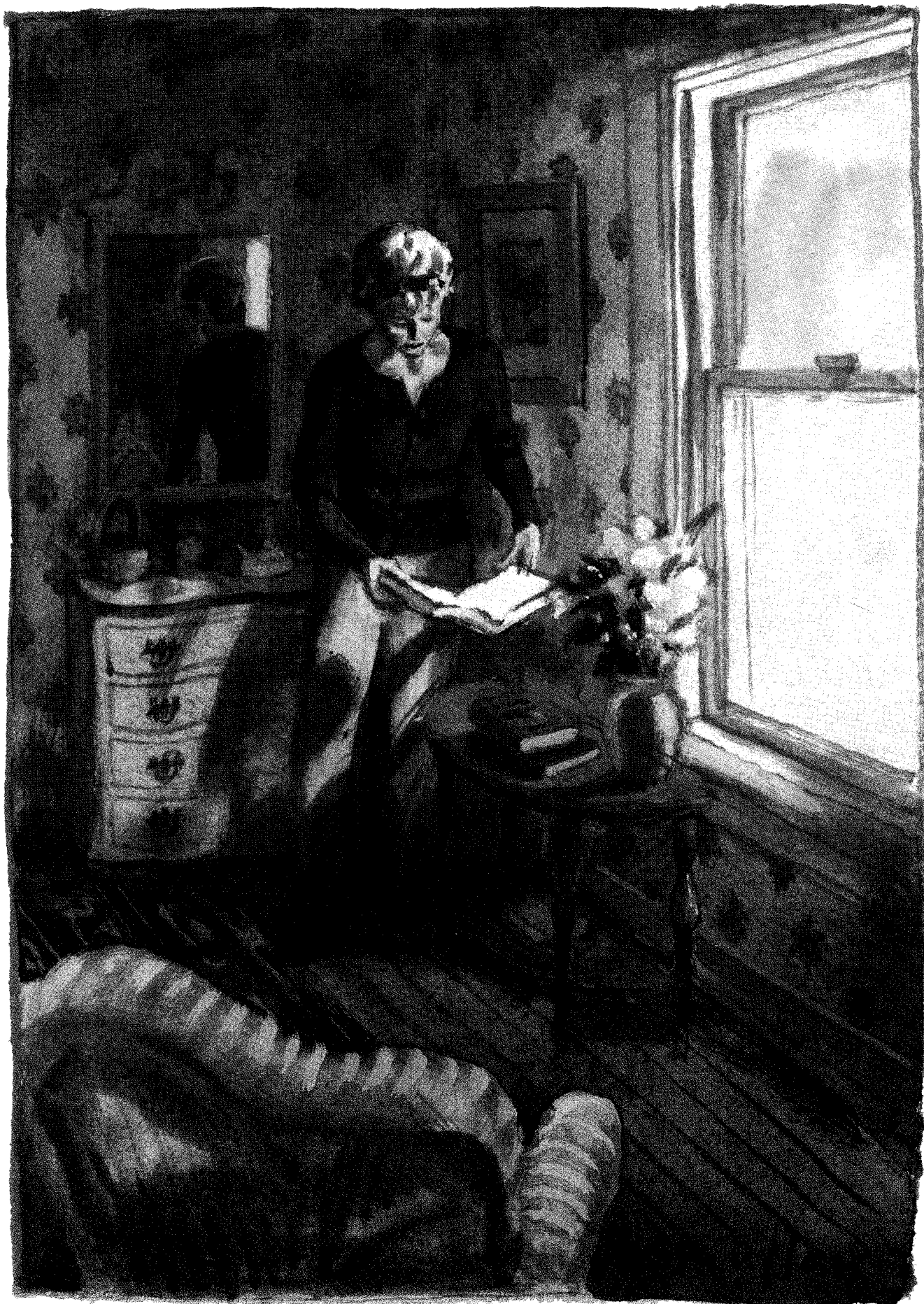
It may be instructive, in trying to account for Munro’s disproportionate power, to consider “Lady With Lapdog,” arguably Chekhov’s most famous and beloved story. Even after dozens of readings (in several translations) I still find it exceedingly difficult to pinpoint how the story works as deeply as it does. One might seize on the regular use of incongruities: the cynical philanderer’s thoughts of a young woman’s slender neck and beautiful eyes, followed by his impression that she is pathetic; the roué cutting a watermelon and eating it silently for a half hour while the woman sobs, thinking herself fallen after their first tryst; the open ending. Chekhov properly placed all statements about beauty, eternity, and falling in love right next to comic, breezy, urbane sentences, lending the impression that this young married woman and her older Muscovite lover, although particular to us, are not out of the human ordinary.

Yet I could think of half a dozen stories to which one could fairly ascribe these same techniques of juxtaposi-

tion and tonal incongruity but which nonetheless lack this story’s power. Likewise, I could strain to name a few writers who possess an immense lyric gift, in whose work a poet’s compression punctuates a novelist’s love of leisured complication, of *time*; yet their stories register altogether differently from Munro’s. Ann Close, Munro’s American editor since *The Beggar Maid* (1978), has described the experience of going back to a place in a story where she remembered a particular passage and finding that it had never been there. “More than with other writers,” Close said, “with Alice, there’s a huge amount between the lines.” At the heart of all great naturalism is mystery, an emotional sum greater than its technical parts.

I am not a sophisticated chronicler of literary reputation. I don’t really know how famous Munro is. And perhaps with our particular favorites there is a tendency to downplay their popularity. No one likes to think his or her taste is common. More than one high school girl has been dismayed to learn that the one boy she personally, idiosyncratically found “cute” is a general heartthrob. In the early eighties I asked friends who were traveling north of the border to find me anything they could by Alice Munro, and my copies of her first three books are Canadian paperbacks. In 1986, when *The Progress of Love* was published, she read to a full house in a large NYU auditorium (New Yorkers are prescient, and by then she’d been publishing stories in their namesake magazine for almost ten years). I have a sense that whatever Munro’s reputation is (and it *is* lofty among writers, of that I am sure), it is not yet exactly what it should be. And the ways in which it is not *quite* what it should be are somehow murky and would seem to have little to do with literature. Lorrie Moore hinted at this





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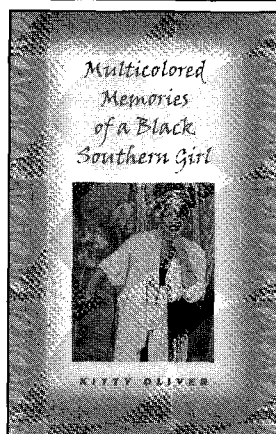
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recently in *The Paris Review*: "I don't believe any serious reader would call her provincial," Moore said, "but I also don't think it is often emphasized how she is the opposite."

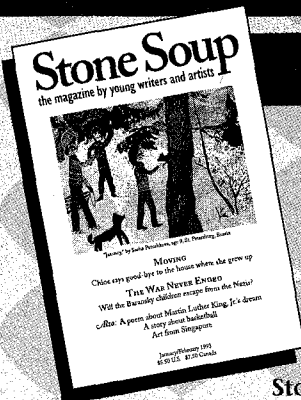
I can think of no better illustration of the universality of Alice Munro's work than the memory of reading it in my twenties. I lived in a fifteenth-floor apartment in New York City, worked as an editor at *The Paris Review*, took the crosstown bus dressed in the city uniform of black stockings, skirts, and pumps bought on sale. My love affairs tended to be of the wistful variety—from afar if not altogether imaginary.

Yet I read Alice Munro's stories of adulterous wives, and country girls gutting turkeys, with the page-turning avidity of someone discovering her own true future. The managing editor, Jeanne McCulloch, did the same. We read them deeply personally, to learn how to live. Without really garnering the permission of our boss, George Plimpton, we planned to interview Munro for *The Paris Review*. We hoped by this to achieve for her a kind of canonization.

No writer in his right mind would have wanted canonization to depend on us. Though we read the stories over and over, we were also terribly busy, figuring out not only the craft of writing rejection letters but also the tricks of making a living in New York City. We met Alice Munro and her editor at the Chelsea brownstone of her agent, Virginia Barber, where the three women seemed occupied and prosperous, in the middle of life. They talked about shopping with the exhilaration of serious women who don't often shop. We started the interview, and in the fashion typical of *The Paris Review* (often edited by would-be writers in their twenties), it languished for seven years.

Making a case for Alice Munro in 2001 is not what making a case for Herman Melville would have been in the 1880s, or for Henry James at the time of the New York Editions, early in the 1900s. Since *The Beggar Maid* most reviews have been stellar; Munro has received all the major Canadian literary prizes and our National Book Critics Circle Award. (As a Canadian, she is not eligible for our National Book Award or

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Pulitzer Prize; Her last five books have not been short-listed for the Booker Prize, because the Booker no longer considers short-story collections.) So splitting hairs about precisely to which tier of the pantheon she belongs can feel a bit like carping that Proust, Joyce, and Kafka never won the Nobel Prize. But when educated general readers talk about the great living fiction writers, Munro isn't consistently mentioned with Saul Bellow, Toni Morrison, Philip Roth, and John Updike.

Three reasons come to mind. First, Munro writes about the "lives of girls and women," to quote the title of her one novel, their conflicts, comedy, milestones, irony, and domestic detail, vacuuming and all. We are still, despite thirty years of feminism, a culture that considers the word "domestic" when applied to fiction to mean "tamer" and even "less." Munro's reach has become vast in recent collections, but her stories about the western expansion, about North American history, and even about murder are centered on a credible female character. Second, she, like the great majority of writers, has claimed a specific fictional geography, and hers—midwestern rural Canada—does not have any particular edge or sexiness. Third, she writes short stories. The roughly contemporary writers most akin to her in sensibility, the late Illinoisan William Maxwell and the Irish William Trevor (both writers of exquisite short stories and also novels), share her relative obscurity. They, like Grace Paley, Isaac Babel, and Marilynne Robinson, are sometimes said to be "writers' writers," meaning that most people haven't ever heard of them.

Munro's first three books, *Dance of the Happy Shades* (1968), *Lives of Girls and Women* (1971), and *Something I've Been Meaning to Tell You* (1974), introduced her great themes—shame and its connection to poverty, how class monkeys with sexual desire, the problems of a female artist in functioning satisfactorily as an artist or a female—and also some of her leitmotifs: the glamour of airplanes, the changes in domestic life brought about by electrification and indoor plumbing, the

recurring figure of a half-decrepit grandmother who is still an actor, however minor, in the household drama.

An archetypal family emerges. The mother, refined and particular, strives for elegance even as her health is declining. She has a wealth of aunts and perhaps considers herself a little above her husband's family. The father remains upright and honorable, with necessary privacies; he is often a trapper of sorts (fox, mink, muskrat, marten), comfortable with a rougher male world outside, in possession of raucous relatives and perhaps a randy past. The father's family is apt to play practical jokes, put uncooked beans in the soup, and throw forks and dishrags at one another. ("A bad thing in that family was to have them say you were *sensitive*, as they did of my mother.") In "Walker Brothers Cowboy," the first story in Munro's first collection, the mother takes the Depression personally.

Though casual readers may derive a sense that Munro's characters come from the wrong side of the tracks, it seems to me that she writes about the construction of class not only in broad, upstairs-downstairs extremes (the husband rich, the wife a scholarship student) but also within families and communities whose differences appear invisible from the outside. She chronicles the nuances, snubs, and un-sent invitations on which we build class and maintain it.

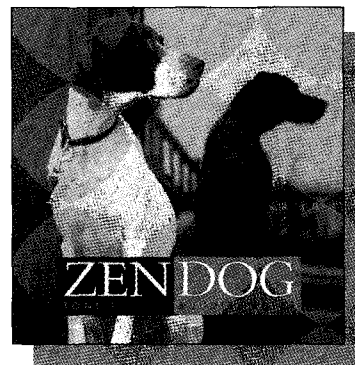
I'm not sure whether country girls still sleep with rich boys who come to the Canadian lakes for the summer, as they do in "Thanks for the Ride." But what lingers, memorably, is the conundrum of why they ever did. It wasn't for money, or the hope of marriage. The old grandma, hovering in the living room, knows better than that. It seems to have been its own rough convention, the trophy of a certain glamour—the glamour of just that night.

Munro also returns again and again to the Jamesian subject of the artist. In her work, though, the artist is a woman in a small town, without the complications of recognition. There is a "poetess" in the wilds of nineteenth-century frontier Canada ("Meneseteung"), a violinist in the 1940s who dreams of

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leaving her baby outside to die ("My Mother's Dream"), and an aging piano teacher, Miss Marsalles, whose popularity is waning ("Dance of the Happy Shades"):

Mary Lambert's girl no longer takes; neither does Joan Crimble's ... Piano lessons are not so important now as they once were; everybody knows that. Dancing is believed to be more favourable to the development of the whole child.

Munro writes here as if she were inside a chorus of suburban mothers (we feel their discomfort as they consider decamping to ballet while listening to a child—not theirs—perform). Yet for her, the deities are the otherworldly eccentrics, the artists. The piano teacher's poverty, increasingly revealed, embarrasses the conventional mothers. To make things worse, Miss Marsalles insists on giving her pupils end-of-the-year gifts, odd books that she clearly can't afford.

As at any piano recital anywhere, the children play and parents, mostly mothers, clap with relief. Finally, more students arrive with a uniformed woman from a "special" school. Unlike all the others, one of these children can truly play.

We are accustomed to notice performances, at Miss Marsalles' parties, but it cannot be said that anyone has ever expected music ... that carries with it the freedom of a great unemotional happiness ... The music is in the room and then it is gone and naturally enough no one knows what to say. For the moment she is finished it is plain that she is just the same as before, a girl from Greenhill School. Yet the music was not imaginary. The facts are not to be reconciled.

This is as good a description of art as any. Absolute, undeniable, but useless in the world—not about to change the girl's prognosis for becoming one of the busy, successful mothers.

No doubt dissertations are being written about sexuality in Alice Munro's middle work. She has done for female sexuality what Philip Roth did for male sexuality, covering much the same historical period (though it would seem they knew vastly different women).

Allan Gurganus has written,

The besieged young mothers of Alice Munro resemble Chekhov's dreamy swains or Lewis Carroll's girlchildren. At any moment they're apt to fall through the ordinary into a realm too heightened and meaningful to quite endure. Adultery in Munro is chaotic but usually worth it. I've come to consider Munro our greatest and most subtle surrealist. The plainest of surfaces ignite with the fugitive erotic undertow. After sex, even a ready-made supermarket lemon cake can feel like a miracle.

In Munro's world it is the women who stray. (Is it sex or is it love? Whatever it is, it *is* necessary, the velocity of these stories insists.) The shock and credibility of the sexuality (alluded to more than rendered) derives—like Chekhov's—from its absurd, yet dead serious, collisions with the mundane, tactile elements of her characters' lives.

Certain notions kept banging about in her head. Lawyer. Divorce. Punishment ... the boys had summer jobs, Debbie was about to have a minor operation on her ear ... A man was coming to look at the drains. ("Wig-time")

In "Five Points" a man tells his married lover a story from his childhood about a heavy immigrant girl who paid suburban boys to have sex with her. His lover guesses that he was one of the boys paid, and with his admission their affair enters new depths, becoming more like a marriage. In "Wild Swans" a girl on a train, fondled by a minister, feels disgusted but also hugely curious. Munro describes—as I've never seen anyone else do—how people put erotic memories, not always pleasant ones, to use over and over in their lives.

Munro's women are not terribly sentimental about marriage. Divorce is less a tragedy than a developmental milestone: "Gail considers the fierce glitter of diamond rings as Phyllis pulls her hand away. Wives have diamond rings and headaches, Gail thinks. They still do. The truly successful ones do." ("The Jack Randa Hotel")

And they *still* do. One of the good fortunes of living at the same time as a great artist is the privilege of reading your own world. Alice Munro, who is

seventy, is the age of my parents. Some of the world she represents ("Mrs. Peebles said she couldn't make pie crust, the most amazing thing I ever heard a woman admit") seems as historical as the horse-drawn carriages that characters in Tolstoy hail like taxis. Often Munro is historical and modern simultaneously, as in her depiction of the doctor who treats the nineteenth-century frontier "poetess": "He believes that her troubles would clear up if she got married. He believes this in spite of the fact that most of his nerve medicine is prescribed for married women."

By the time of *The Beggar Maid* the grandmother in the kitchen, so prevalent before, lives in the county home. These stories follow a crude, Falstaffian stepmother and a smart scholarship student through the girl's childhood, triumphant engagement at college to a West Coast millionaire, marriage, almost affair, and divorce.

This collection made Munro's name. It also gave the impression that she was an autobiographical writer, because of the consistent character of a smart girl from the poorer side of town making her way into the world with gumption. But there are problems with an easy assumption of autobiography. At the simplest level, there are, for example, two vastly different, even contradictory mothers: a refined, fragile mother who sometimes dies, recurring in many stories, and a tough, ill-educated woman, full of crude, vital energy, who feels eternal. "The material about my mother is my central material in life," Munro said in our interview with her, "and it always comes the most readily to me. If I just relax, that's what will come up."

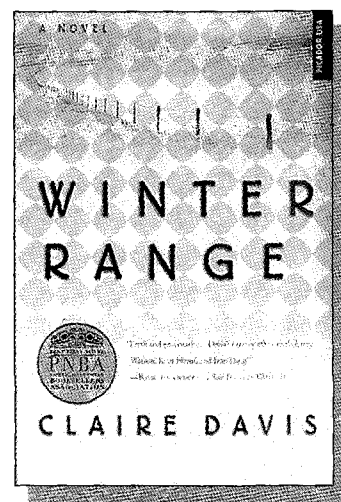
She said of the stepmother in *The Beggar Maid*, "But Flo wasn't a real person," only adding to our sense of mystery.

We asked what would impel such different approaches leading to the same credible character. Munro said, "I'm doing less personal writing now than I used to for a very simple, obvious reason. You use up your childhood, unless you're able, like William Maxwell, to keep going back and finding won-

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derful new levels in it. The deep, personal material of the latter half of your life is your children. You can write about your parents when they're gone, but your children are still going to be here, and you're going to want them to come and visit you in the nursing home."

By the summer of 1993, when Jeanne and I traveled to Canada to finish our *Paris Review* interview, we were no longer in our twenties. Neither of us still worked at the *Review*. I was pregnant; Jeanne was soon to be married. In the scorching Canadian summer we didn't wear black.

The Ontario landscape, modest and rolling like that of the American Midwest, was transformed for us by Munro's stories. Our un-air-conditioned room in the Hotel Bedford, in Goderich, across

did sound not exactly easy but possible, as if anyone could do it if she only worked.

There seemed to be nothing edited or exaggerated for our benefit. Among the writers she considered early influences Munro included Tolstoy, Chekhov, Proust, and James, but also Erica Jong. From our work at the *Review* we remembered that some writers would send in increasingly detailed answers, right up to printing day, for addition to their Writers-at-Work interviews. Not Munro. Indeed, she seemed to talk down our awe, to shoo off reverence, to eagerly explain away her own genius. She never forgot that she was talking to two younger writers. She told us she admired our friendship, something that in the clutter of our twenties

pathies now seem to fall absolutely evenly.

"I am in awe of how she operates in the third person," Richard Ford told me recently. "She manages to make that third person *do* more than anybody I've ever seen in my life. When I do it I feel like I'm pushing a shopping cart from the front backwards. She has it not both ways but all ways. It accounts for the rich density of her stories and makes the reading experience without equal. It is greater than life."

Like the astonishing title story of Munro's previous collection, *The Love of a Good Woman*, the title story of *Hateship, Friendship* contains more range, drama, and tonal echoes than most contemporary novels. It is, among other things, a love story, perhaps the hardest spell to cast in 2001.

A large spinster of amazing strength and stamina works as the improbable romantic heroine. Johanna has been loved so far by one person, an old woman (now dead) whom she was paid to take care of, but she reciprocated that love and doesn't feel cheated. She still wears the dead woman's good coat. No one sees her as sexual; no one really sees her at all, for that matter, except when a chore needs doing. Ken Boudreau is a dissolute, ill, weak man we first witness in the sordid bedroom of a ramshackle hotel he has won on a bet. Clanging in his feverish memory are the accusing echoes of two women who claim to be in love with him. Another of Munro's smart girls from the wrong side of the tracks—this time a shoemaker's daughter who reads Dickens—writes letters to Johanna and signs them with Boudreau's name, in a prank that is part girlish fun, part cruel hoax. We meet Johanna after she has been taken in. In the town's fine clothing store, *Milady's*, she is trying to buy the first frivolous clothing of her life, except that for her it is not frivolous. She expects to wear the suit she sees in the window on her wedding day.

The scene contains elements of a fairy tale: the saleswoman is dressing Cinderella for her assignation with the prince, who has no idea at all that she is coming. Our spinster intends to buy her own glass slipper and pay cash. As

Alice Munro's genius, like Chekhov's, is quiet and particularly hard to describe, because it has the simplicity of the best naturalism, in that it seems not translated from life but, rather, like life itself.

the square from the nineteenth-century courthouse, felt improved by our conviction that we had checked into the hotel in "Carried Away," where the librarian lost her virginity to a traveling salesman who didn't know that was what was happening.

It's hard to capture the quality of Alice Munro in person. For a writer who has written an inordinate amount about old maids (she told us she'd always known at heart that she was an aging spinster), she is beautiful, with hair like Virginia Woolf's. Her manner was off-hand and modest as we crudely probed the mysteries of the stories we loved so much. She answered us plainly, always citing a simple cause for an amazing effect. Asked about the story in which the country girls sleep with the summer boys, she said, "Oh, that one came from a friend of my husband, who was visiting and told us about going to the country and meeting a girl ..."

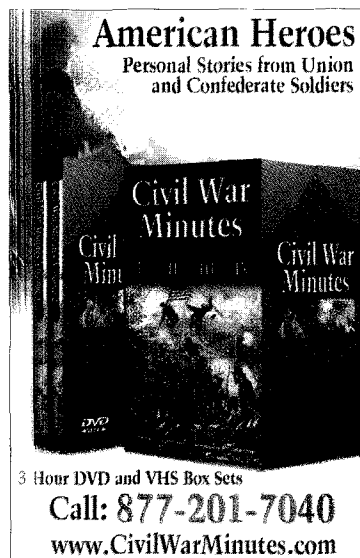
Munro had none of the bravura or bluster of a great writer, and it was easy to forget that she was one. Speaking of her stories, she made what she

we'd never thought much about before. She was generously thinking of us, not "canonization."

Like the highest practitioners of any craft, Alice Munro seems, in her four most recent collections, to have left old forms behind, or to have broken them open, so that she is now writing not short stories or novellas but something altogether new. The nine tales in *Hateship, Friendship* feel symphonic, large, architecturally gorgeous. Despite their complexity, they wield the power of urgently felt material, and in each of their many rooms they seem intimate. But it is difficult to locate the author here. In Munro's earlier work, even in the third person, we felt the authorial presence in spots of density, concentrations of heat. Here even the three first-person stories seem composed by a fair, high visionary, the Beethoven of the late quartets, everywhere and nowhere in the work. The earlier collections often contained *more* stories told in the first person. But the shift goes deeper. Munro's sym-

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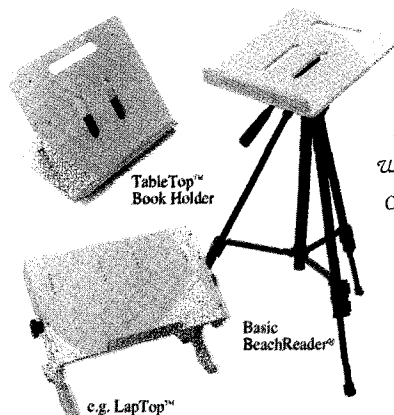


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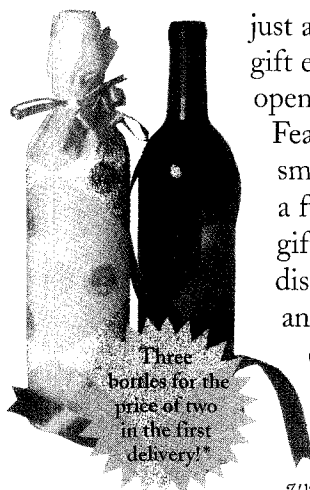
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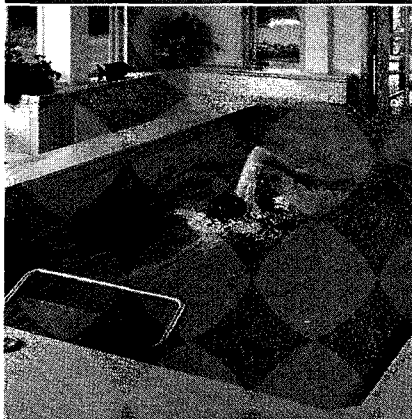
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Chekhov did, Munro here sets a fragile, perhaps pathetic act of hope next to a contemporary reflection. When the suit from the window proves a flop on our large heroine, the saleswoman drops her façade: "She stopped smiling. She looked disappointed and tired, but kinder." No longer a fairy godmother, now just a woman who owns a high-end clothing store that is threatened by a highway mall, she says, "You have large bones and what's the matter with that? Dinky little velvet-covered buttons are not for you. Don't bother with it anymore. Just take it off."

The novella endeavors to show how a love story could also be true, to take into account the pranks, deceptions, deflations, luck, moral qualms, expensive flattering plain brown dresses, and hard work that go into the backstage mechanics of romance. It is as if Munro has set for herself the challenge of writing credible love stories for a culture that usually satisfies its romantic cravings at the movies and turns to fiction for the hard, ugly truth about marriage. At once wildly romantic and ruefully modern, she renders characters who are middle-class, middle-aged or older, and living in small Canadian towns, yet whose lives yield a drama worthy of Shakespeare's princes and kings.

Why do we, in jaded, post-industrial America, buy it—the handsome ne'er-do-well with the plain, hardworking spinster? Much has to do with vantage; the tight lines of the story offer only a few managed close-ups of the characters' crucial decisions. We watch him check the balance in her savings book; we feel him sink back and allow her to take over. We understand his feeling of relief and the improbable tremor of renewed hope. We are not asked to consider the man's sensations as he first unhooks the spinster's bra. It may also have something to do with those haranguing voices of the women who claim to love Boudreau. From our distance they seem ridiculous, the suffering an extravagant waste. We see outlines of essential needs that fit, and those needs are not sentimental. Like the stored furniture from his riotous first marriage, Boudreau possesses an

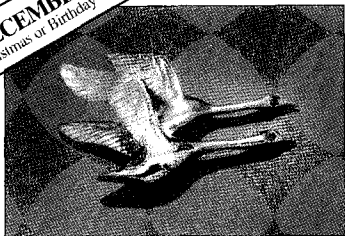
inherent elegance, a glamour that Johanna will cherish and forgive; and she has a bank account and a canny ability to use it generously and well. Together they make a life—a life first conjured by a bored smart girl, a reader, in a small town, biding her time until she can get out.

Other love stories in the collection also introduce unlikely protagonists: a long-married couple endures the onset of a wife's memory loss, and her husband, a chronic womanizer, uses his charm for a selfless, sexual act of love ("A Bear Came Over the Mountain"). A cancer patient suffers her husband's latest obsessive crush while waiting in an uncomfortably hot car ("Floating Bridge"). One of Munro's most challenging husbands to date seems to be suspended in a kaleidoscope—by the end of the story we view him in a kinder configuration, in one of those miraculous shifts in point of view so necessary to a long marriage.

Munro's men and women, even dangerous men and reckless women, are now seen from the perspective of an adult watching the doings of kindergarten children. She is far beyond taking sides. In "What Is Remembered," one of my favorite stories, she writes,

Young husbands were stern, in those days. Just a short time before, they had been suitors, almost figures of fun, knock-kneed and desperate in their sexual agonies. Now, bedded down, they turned resolute and disapproving. Off to work every morning, clean shaven, youthful necks in knotted ties, days spent in unknown labors, home again at suppertime to take a critical glance at the evening meal and to shake out the newspaper, hold it up between themselves and the muddle of the kitchen, the ailments and emotions, the babies. What a lot they had to learn, so quickly. How to kowtow to bosses and how to manage wives. How to be authoritative about mortgages, retaining walls, lawn grass, drains, politics, as well as about the jobs that had to maintain their families for the next quarter of a century. It was the women, then, who could slip back—during the daytime hours, and always allowing for the stunning responsibility that had been landed on them, in the matter of the chil-

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dren—into a kind of second adolescence. A lightening of spirits when the husbands departed. Dreamy rebellion, subversive get-togethers, laughing fits that were a throwback to high school, mushrooming between the walls that the husband was paying for, in the hours when he wasn't there.

The husband and wife here stay within their mythic traditional parade, but Munro gives them the dignity of the procession's end while also including two counterpoints to the march: one of frivolity, in the wife's youthful glamour, her linen dress and white gloves, her knowledge of fashion trivia (Balmain's exhortation to wear white gloves); the other the fugitive melody of an erotic betrayal, wound deeply and perhaps productively into this marriage.

There is something I always hope for in fiction that has no literary term. It's best explained by analogy. In a certain painting by Degas a woman dries herself after a bath, one foot up on the rim of the tub, her whole body leaning over. Seeing that image, one might recognize a human position common in life but never before seen through the bending lens of representation. The same thing could be said for a shade of red in Mondrian. Munro gives us such recognitions. Her emotional palette is vast.

Here is a portrait of a young woman, from "Family Furnishings": After a lunch with the aunt she once idolized, full of country food, full also of emotion, from secrets revealed with their attendant burdens of guilt and sorrow, the young woman walks alone through the city. Her friends are away. Her fiancé (who "admired" Hamlet but "had no time for tragedy—for the squalor of tragedy—in ordinary life") is visiting his "good-looking" parents. She walks and walks, and then slips into a drugstore coffee shop, where the bitter black coffee tastes "medicinal." She feels full not only of food but of people, of life. What soothes her as much as the coffee is the solitude, the urban anonymity: "such happiness, to be alone."

I've never before seen the artist's need for solitude as alleviation of fullness, an overload of life.

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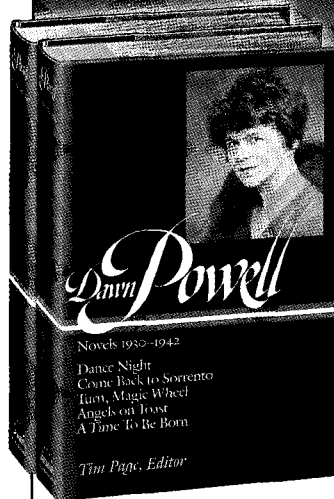


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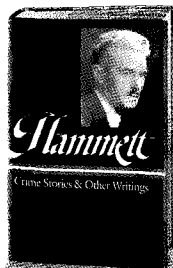
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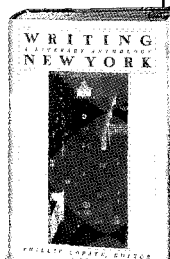
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There is a long line of idolized women in Munro's stories, usually independent and childless, living emotionally extravagant, artistic lives, admired by shyer, more cautious, and often younger women. The very real suffering and squalor endured by these idols is sometimes glimpsed in flashes, with the troubling suggestion that their more colorful ways may not all have been a matter of choice. But usually the younger woman is too much in the thick of her own life to pause long to consider the implications of these hardships for herself or her future.

In real life, when Jeanne and I met her in Canada, Alice Munro lived in the two-story wooden house in which her second husband was born. She told us (a cautionary tale) that she'd never had a house she really loved. She worked in the dining room, at a small table that held a manual typewriter. She said she often stood up before her dictionary, and spent hours there day-dreamily composing.

There were moments when we felt our generational difference: her two years "at university" were the only time in her life when she didn't have to do housework (we hoped there wasn't too much housework looming in our futures). When her daughters were very small, she worked during their naps. (This particularly consoled me. I intended to put down my future son for three or four naps daily.) There were silent spots in the interview, points too private and difficult to pursue, which seemed to have to do with prices paid for needing work while having children. We shook our heads; somehow it would be different for us. At moments even Munro's casual conversation had the cadences of poetry, as in her description of a suburb in western Canada where she once lived: "I was with the wives of the climbing men." But iambic or not, the suburbs, with their wives, were not where we hoped to live.

She made it all seem not easy but possible. Later we sensed a vast gulf between the woman telling us how she made the thing and the thing itself, a gulf still containing the enormous mystery. ▮

ONE-ALARM FIRE

U.S. counterterrorism may be overly preoccupied with biological weapons—which have a rather poor track record

BY BRUCE HOFFMAN

.....

At a time when Americans are scrambling to buy gas masks and fill prescriptions for antibiotics, it is no wonder that *Germes*, a book about bio-terrorism, has become a best seller. Its three authors, all veteran *New York Times* reporters, have unquestionable pedigrees, given their expertise in the Middle East, U.S. na-

GERMS: BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS AND AMERICA'S SECRET WAR

by Judith Miller,
Stephen Engelberg,
and William Broad

Simon & Schuster
382 pages, \$27.00

tional security, and science, respectively. Their book suggests that this country's alarm is well founded. The authors write,

The emergence of the United States as the world's most powerful nation has made biological attack more likely. Adversaries that resent America's global dominance, envy its wealth, or fear its overwhelming military power can fight back most effectively with unconventional weapons. The attack on the U.S.S. *Cole*, in which a modern warship was crippled and nearly sunk in October 2000 by a dinghy packed with explosives and detonated by suicide bombers, showed how the seemingly powerless can strike a devastating military blow. In the coming years, those willing to die for their cause may well choose instead to become smallpox carriers or Marburg [a deadly hemorrhagic virus] martyrs.

If the bombing of the *Cole*, in which a total of seventeen sailors died, can launch a logical leap to the mass use of indiscriminate killer viruses, one shudders to think what conclusions the authors might have reached had their book been written after September 11.

The excerpt above encapsulates the main shortcoming of *Germes*—its lack of context and perspective. This derives largely from the authors' initial goal, which was, as they candidly explain, an attempt to "explore for the *New York Times*" the reasons behind the Pentagon's decision in 1997 to vaccinate some 2.4 million soldiers and reservists against anthrax. But their inquiry expanded to include an examination of the

Clinton Administration's effort to elevate bio-terrorism to the status of a major national-security priority. In what is meant

to be a dramatic account of the efforts of a handful of leading scientists, policy-makers, and senior officials to focus national attention on this menace, the authors' failure to place this particular threat within the context of other risks, perhaps equally pressing or even more likely, becomes at once conspicuous and lamentable. It also renders *Germes* more descriptive than analytical, and thus ensures that when, in a concluding chapter, the authors belatedly offer some real analysis, it comes across as too little too late.

"Is the threat of germ weapons real or exaggerated?" they ask in the first sentence of the conclusion. The answer is an unsatisfying "both." In fact, the succeeding five and a half pages raise precisely the questions that should have been asked throughout the preceding text. For example, the book begins with a portentous recounting of a 1984 episode in the small Oregon town of The Dalles. Followers of the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, an Indian mystic, tried to poison the local reservoir and contaminated the salad bars of area restaurants with salmonella bacteria, in hopes of debilitating the populace and thereby rigging a municipal election in the cult's favor. But this example is irrelevant to discussion of the frightful potential of biological weapons and the wanton homicidal intention of those who would likely wield them, because the Oregon attack was deliberately conceived to be nonlethal. And after 314 pages warning of the lethal potential of such weapons and the growing likelihood that they will be used, the authors conclude, simply, "Only a handful of groups have attempted biological attacks and fewer still have succeeded.

Thus far, the Rajneeshees' germ assault ... has proven to be an anomaly."

Had the authors asked their concluding questions earlier, they might have been able to explore in more depth this paradox: as mesmerizingly attractive as these weapons have been to an assortment of contemporary terrorists, megalomaniacal dictators, and other miscreants, they have historically proved frustratingly ineffective. In a seminal 1999 article on terrorism and weapons of mass destruction for *National Security Studies Quarterly*, David Rapoport argued, "The limited value or effectiveness of chemical or biological weapons in wars of the past seems the most compelling reason they were not used much." In support of this argument Rapoport cited evidence that despite its extensive use during World War I, poison gas accounted for only five percent of the casualties. Even in more recent times, such as when Iraq used chemical weapons in its war against Iran, fewer than one percent (5,000) of the 600,000 Iranians who perished were killed by gas. The wartime use of biological weapons has a similar record. On at least eleven occasions before and during World War II the Imperial Japanese Army employed germ agents as diverse as cholera, dysentery, bubonic plague, anthrax, and paratyphoid, disseminated in both water and air. Not only did these fail to kill as many Chinese soldiers as the Japanese had hoped, but on at least one occasion—the 1942 assault on Chekiang—10,000 Japanese soldiers were affected, of whom some 1,700 died. "The Japanese program's principal defect, a problem common to all efforts so far," Rapoport concluded, was "an ineffective delivery system."

Indeed, as the experience of Aum Shinrikyo, the Japanese religious cult responsible for a nerve-gas attack on the Tokyo subway in 1995, demonstrated, delivery was still a significant technological hurdle more than fifty years later. Moreover, Aum's frustrations with developing biological weapons were what had driven it to concentrate instead on producing chemical weapons such as nerve gas. On at least nine occasions Aum members had attempted to disseminate

PEOPLE I MET HITCHHIKING ON USA HIGHWAYS

by ERIC CHAET

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botulinum toxin or anthrax using aerosol means: each time they failed, either because the botulinum agents they grew and enriched were not toxic or because the mechanical sprayers they used to disseminate the anthrax spores became clogged and hence inoperative. As a result of these failures the cult's scientists concluded that chemical weapons posed significantly less formidable scientific and technological challenges than biological ones. Chemical attacks are, however, arguably easier than biological attacks to detect and to contain, because biological infection occurs without notice and is usually followed by an incubation period during which victims unknowingly spread the contagion.

Aum's inability to achieve casualties on the scale ascribed to such weapons—despite the cult's considerable wealth, the technical expertise of its well-educated members, and the state-of-the-art laboratories and equipment at their disposal—speaks volumes about the challenges facing any less-endowed terrorist organization. Although the authors of *Germes* note Aum's failure, conceding that "making a biological weapon was harder than some experts had claimed," they unaccountably neglect to reconcile this fact with the alarmist thrust of their argument. That the scientists who ran the Soviet Union's ambitious biological-warfare programs—who are now underpaid and disenchanted by their diminished status in post-Cold War Russia—might be recruited by or even driven to seek out rogue states means that their expertise may fall into the hands of America's enemies. Even so, the book's narrow reliance on supposition, along with its failure to thoroughly examine available historical and empirical evidence, undermines its credibility and illuminates important gaps in its central argument.

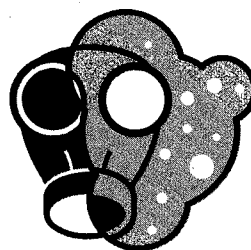
The ineffectiveness of germs as weapons is further substantiated by the work of Seth Carus, a researcher at the National Defense University. For the past several years Carus has compiled perhaps the most authoritative accounting of the use of biological agents by a wide

range of adversaries, including terrorists, government operatives, ordinary criminals, and the mentally unstable. His exhaustive database, which begins in 1900, reveals that over the past century a grand total of ten people have been killed (now eleven, and perhaps more, owing to the anthrax poisoning discovered in October) and fewer than 900 have been made ill as the result of some 180 incidents of either bio-terrorism or bio-crimes. The majority of these incidents involved the selective poisoning of specific people rather than the wholesale, indiscriminate attacks most often imagined. Neither Carus nor his research is cited in the book's index or bibliography.

Finally, the attempt in *Germes* to call attention to an allegedly conspicuous gap in America's defenses against bio-terrorism paradoxically illuminates a crucial weakness that may indirectly have contributed to the success of the September 11 attacks. U.S. counterterrorism efforts in recent

years may have been focused too exclusively on extremes: the low-end threat posed by car and truck bombing of buildings and the more exotic high-end threat posed by biological weapons,

chemical weapons, and cyber-attacks. The middle range of terrorism, which embraces potentially quite lethal threats involving conventional weapons or attacks, seems to have been discounted or almost forgotten. For example, according to one estimate, of more than 201 federal planning exercises conducted in the United States in recent years, at least two thirds were concerned only with defending against biological or chemical attacks, and thus ignored the possibility that other kinds of attacks—such as we saw at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon—might result in large numbers of casualties and might present unique challenges of their own in terms of emergency response and rescue. More than a year before the September attacks the pernicious (though, it must be said, unintended) consequences of this unbalanced focus were brought home to me in a series of meetings and

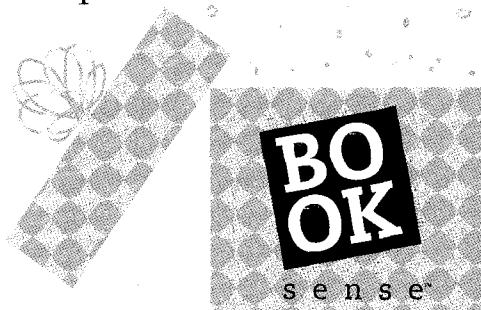


training sessions with state and local emergency personnel in three different U.S. regions. At every session I heard complaints that state and local authorities were unable to use federal funds earmarked for the purchase of anti-terrorism and counterterrorism equipment to obtain essential life-saving apparatus such as concrete and glass cutters and thermal-imaging devices, which would aid in the rescue of victims in buildings collapsed by bombs. Instead these funds could apparently be used only for a range of paraphernalia designed to handle instances of bio-terrorism. The applicability of the more mundane equipment to the situation that arose on September 11 is obvious.

In retrospect, it was not the salad-bar poisonings in 1984 or the nerve-gas attack on the Tokyo subway in 1995 or Aum's nine attempts to use bio-weapons that should have dominated our counterterrorist thinking but the 1986 hijacking in Karachi of a Pan Am airplane, which the terrorists planned to crash into the center of Tel Aviv, and the 1994 hijacking in Algiers of an Air France plane by members of the Armed Islamic Group, who planned to crash it into the heart of Paris. The lesson is that we need to consider the spectrum of possible threats and be reasonably prepared to respond to them. Bio-terrorism is, of course, a salient threat. But it is only one of many threats we face, and not necessarily the most likely or—the conventional wisdom notwithstanding—even the most effective. A case in point is the recent spate of anthrax exposures. At the time of this writing one person had died, two others were suffering from entirely treatable rashes, and some limited number appeared to have come into contact with anthrax spores—hardly the astronomical body counts of which *Germes* authors warn. As undeniably potent a psychological weapon as these bugs and pathogens certainly are, terrorists can kill more effectively—and more plentifully—by relying on more-conventional weapons. Indeed, as September 11 clearly demonstrated, terrorists can still readily achieve their dual aims of fear and intimidation simply by blowing things up. ■

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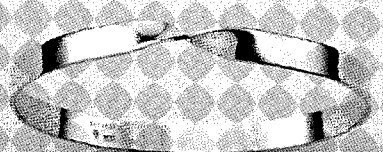
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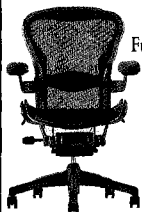
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THE COMPLETE LYRICS OF IRVING BERLIN

edited by Robert
Kimball and
Linda Emmet

Knopf, 558 pages,
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In the aftermath of September 11 the whole country seemed to be singing "God Bless America," underscoring Irving Berlin's incomparable role in American song. (Berlin wrote the piece toward the end of World War I but suppressed it until the outbreak of World War II, fearing that it might be too broad or corny.) His anthems include "White Christmas," "Easter Parade," and "There's No Business Like Show Business"; no other songwriter has written as many. No one else has written as many popular songs, period. Yet although he was lauded as a tunesmith of genius as far back as 1911, when he debuted "Alexander's Ragtime Band," Berlin is often undervalued as a lyricist and said to lack Cole Porter's erudition, Lorenz Hart's interior rhymes, and Johnny Mercer's homespun wisdom. *The Complete Lyrics*, which spans eighty-one of the composer's 101 years (1888-1989), demands that we reconsider this appraisal. In addition to highlighting his gift for economy, directness, and slang, it presents Berlin as an obsessive, often despairing commentator on the passing scene.

By the late 1960s Tin Pan Alley and Hollywood lyrics had come to be seen mostly as hackwork. Robert Kimball helped to redress that view with a series of oversized anthologies of great lyricists. He began in 1983 with *The Complete Lyrics of Cole Porter*—a shrewd choice, because Porter's wit suited the printed page especially well. He moved forward with complete editions of the equally intricate work of Hart and George Gershwin. Last year, with his longtime editor, Robert Gottlieb, Kimball compiled an indispensable anthology, *Reading Lyrics*, which, surprisingly, includes more songs by Berlin than by anyone else. Now, in collaboration with one of Berlin's daughters, Linda Emmet,

he has broken the locks off Berlin's fabled archive, giving us Berlin's oeuvre, a third of which—nearly 400 songs—was unknown.

Berlin wrote about everything: the wars, of course; and most aspects of show business, all the national holidays, and every kind of cooing and wooing; but also economics, FDR, Al Capone, nudist colonies, censors, Bolsheviks, lynchings, Prohibition, New York's finest, sex, loneliness, isolation, and insomnia. On balance, Berlin was sadder and funnier than we knew. As a parodist, he took on Porter ("I'm a eunuch who / Has just been through an op— / But if, baby, I'm the bottom, / You're the top") and himself ("God bless America, / Land I enjoy, / No discussions with Russians / Till they stop sending arms to Hanoi"). A swarm of puns on the word "step," in "Everybody Step," is worthy of the Marx Brothers, and "I've Got My Captain Working for Me Now" remains a rare comic response to the aftermath of war. Some of his lines might have passed muster with Dorothy Parker: "Someday I'm going to murder the bugler; / Someday they're going to find him dead— / I'll amputate his reveille, / And step upon it heavily, / And spend the rest of my life in bed."

Berlin's lyrics are often crude, though never cruel, and many of them are pure swill. Yet from the beginning he had an ear for the telling phrase, employing dialects to freshen familiar tropes: "I just couldn't stop her, for dinner and supper / Some kisses and hugs was the food; / When she wasn't nice it was more better twice, / When she's bad she was better than good." Still, his greatest work is that which instantly entered the public imagination, and if it is impossible to read "Isn't This a Lovely Day (To Be Caught in the Rain)?" "How Deep Is the Ocean (How High Is the Sky)," "Let's Face the Music and Dance," "All By Myself," "I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm," "How About Me?" and many more without hearing the melody in the mind's ear, that's the

way it's supposed to be. The trick was to find the right words for the right tune, and no one did it better than Berlin. —GARY GIDDINS

Devotees of literary postmodernism may feel compelled to read every word generated by one of its pioneers, John Barth. That's why the best part of *Coming Soon!!!*—Barth's latest "narrative," as he vaguely labels it in a subtitle—is on page 344, where the aging master promises to write no more. "Done done done, as best Yrs T can do it. Or, rather—like century, like millennium, like career and soon enough life itself, anyhow the able span thereof—all but done, whenafter let Authority be Transferred, Torch Passed, to whoever merits same." In addition to being such a relief, that passage is actually comprehensible, unlike vast portions of the rest of the book.

Back in 1956, when he was twenty-six, Barth published a brilliant novel, *The Floating Opera*, and another one soon after, called *The End of the Road*. Although several subsequent works (*The Sot-Weed Factor*, *Giles Goat-Boy*, *Lost in the Funhouse*) were critically praised, the truth, if such a thing could be known, might turn out to be a sort of Emperor's New Clothes phenomenon, in which to admit you couldn't make head or tail of a Barth novel was to set yourself apart from the hordes who were shouting "Bravo!" very loudly from the back cover. Now seventy-one, Barth until recently taught creative writing in the graduate writing seminar of his alma mater, Johns Hopkins University, and his fame rests in large part on that prestigious position and on his frequent lectures and essays. These are invariably elegant formulations of postmodern literary theory, written or told in a light, commonsensical, witty, and insightful tone that one wishes he would apply to his fiction.

The plot of *Coming Soon!!!* is a typical and irritating example (in fact, it's a repetition) of the stories-within-stories-within-stories fictional format that Barth

so ardently loves. It concerns two novelists—a recently retired professor emeritus at Johns Hopkins and a graduate writing student there. Each is writing a variation of *The Floating Opera*, and the two authors engage in a sort of race: to finish their respective novels, to publish, to push the limits of postmodernism, and so forth. *Coming Soon!!!* is their efforts intertwined, and the verdict is that neither, finally, is worth the paper it's printed on, much less the reader's time and attention. Perhaps, instead of attempting to slog through *Coming Soon!!!*, readers should read, or re-read, Barth's extraordinary early contributions to American literature, *The Floating Opera* and *The End of the Road*. —NAN GOLDBERG

The acknowledgments of William Bennett's new book include a nod to the weighty matters that occupy the author's workaday life: someone named Nora Burns is thanked for having "kept the office running while I was buried in fourteenth-century histories." This may well have been a demanding task, but it can hardly have been a long-lived one; the fourteenth century is mentioned in exactly one sentence of *The Broken Hearth*. On the other hand, poor Ms. Burns must have been run off her feet on those occasions when her employer was "buried" in accounts of the sex lives of contemporary celebrities and in the prime-time television lineup, which he apparently watched in a state of some agitation, pencil at the ready to note examples of "infidelity, promiscuity, and half-naked bodies groping in bed." The book's thesis is that we've all gone to hell in a hand basket, our moral fabric rent by the combined, malevolent forces of divorce, the women's movement, single parenthood, and *Suddenly Susan*. The book is so often bombastic—Bennett is one to muse on "the Promethean arrogance of the last decades"—and silly that one



COMING
SOON!!!

by John Barth
Houghton Mifflin
406 pages, \$26.00



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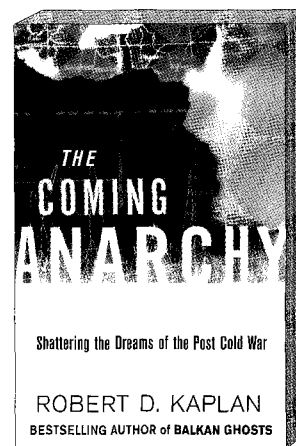
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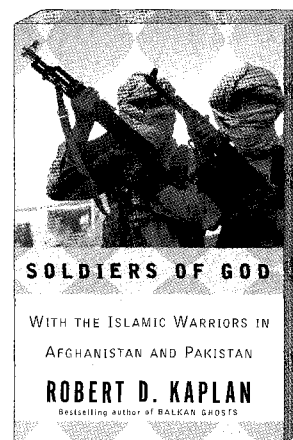
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feels almost unsporting pointing out its failings. Feminists with any history of cardiac irregularity should be separated from *The Broken Hearth* by doctor's orders; they might get to Bennett's recommendation that women—not men—ought to arrive at a “compromise” between their professional and parental duties and fall face forward, casualties of the cause.

But women with sounder constitutions would do well to read this book, because Bennett is on to something here, something that ought to be of central concern to feminists. It is this: the sexual revolution and the women's movement, which are perhaps boons to middle-class and rich women, have in many respects been disastrous for poor women. The growing acceptability of fatherless families may be an agreeable turn of events for the single professional woman who harbors a greater desire for a child than for a man, but poor women impregnated by men who feel no societal imperative to stick around are “forced to go on welfare or to get by on menial jobs, and their chances of improving themselves are bleak,” Bennett writes. “Abandoned by their men, they have been abandoned no less cruelly by the American Left, by the enthusiastic advocates of female sexual ‘liberation’ and by the noisy critics of a ‘patriarchy,’ from which, in a benevolent form, they could only stand to benefit.” Furthermore, we learn that the Centers for Disease Control concluded in one study that “birth certificates lacking a father's name were strong predictors of infant death.” Add to this the well-documented fact that children living under the same roofs as their fathers suffer far less physical and sexual abuse than those living with a stepfather (or a mother's boyfriend), and it becomes abundantly clear that the various forces in our culture that seek to render fathers unnecessary members of their own families—including those feminists who champion women's personal fulfillment over virtually all their obligations—do so at the considerable expense of the poor. What a pity it's a message that only the William Bennetts of our society have the courage to deliver. —CAITLIN FLANAGAN

Italo Svevo's *La coscienza di Zeno*, first published in 1923, seems so effortlessly inventive and eerily prescient that one wonders why the novel isn't more widely appreciated. Championed by James Joyce and then largely ignored in the United States, *Zeno's Conscience* is a hilarious chronicle of a neurotic



ZENO'S CONSCIENCE
by Italo Svevo,
translated by
William Weaver
Knopf/Everyman's
Library, 496 pages,
\$20.00

schemer whose desire to cure his various pathologies is exceeded only by his ability to rationalize them away.

Writing an autobiography at the behest of his despised psychoanalyst, Zeno Cosini loosely organizes his memories around such themes as "My Father's Death," "Wife and Mistress," and "Psychoanalysis." Deluded, solipsistic, and lazy, he begins by recounting the history of his consuming passion for smoking and his attempts to free himself of the addiction. Zeno lights up cigarettes to see if he'll be disgusted (and therefore healthy again), searches for meaningful dates on which to kick the habit, and is almost perpetually certain that he has just smoked for the last time. But it's the quitting that exhilarates him. One's final cigarette, Zeno believes, "gains flavor from the feeling of victory over oneself and the hope of an imminent future of strength and health."

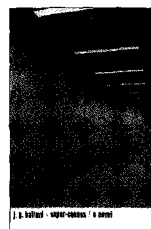
For Zeno, true progress is impossible; life is thesis and antithesis, resolutions and backsliding. Perpetually on the rebound, he enters the family business after vacillating between law and chemistry degrees, and then marries the unattractive Augusta to prove that he no longer pines for her beautiful sister, Ada. Svevo's elliptical sentences convincingly reflect Zeno's psychological contradictions. "I was truly fond of Ada at that moment," Zeno thinks, "and it is a very strange thing to feel fondness for a woman one once ardently desired, did not possess, and who now matters not at all."

Given such contortions, Svevo can't be an easy author to translate. William Weaver, a Bard College professor who has translated Italo Calvino and Umberto Eco, updates the novelist's idio-

syncratic prose with great affection. In his perceptive introduction, Weaver explains that Svevo's Italian (his third language, after the Trieste dialect and German) was considered aesthetically wanting. In contrast to Beryl de Zoete's mellifluous translation, Weaver's version conscientiously preserves the chopiness of Svevo's ungainly style.

Weaver's biographical tidbits shed welcome light on Svevo's brilliantly offbeat project, which offers devastating and prophetic insights into psychoanalysis and the self-help movements it spawned. Ultimately, Zeno flunks out of therapy (he can't refrain from lying to his doctors), but somehow he emerges a little wiser. As World War I begins and old age approaches, Zeno finds a prescription for inner peace: "Sorrow and love—life, in other words—cannot be considered a sickness because they hurt." —ELIZABETH JUDD

There are many good reasons to read J. G. Ballard. But the best may be the chance of running into lines like "Paul, these bullets—don't get too involved with them" and "The sea was smooth enough to xerox, a vast marbled



SUPER-CANNES
by J. G. Ballard
Picador USA, 392
pages, \$24.00

endpaper." Both come from the latest nightmare romp by the British author (*Crash*, *Empire of the Sun*) whose name is synonymous with utopias run amok. And both are redolent of a psychological displacement that makes Ballard's fictional world like no one else's—a place where a young wife, presented with evidence of a bloodbath near her swimming pool, merely deems it wise not to get "too involved"; a place where even the beauty of the sea is best appreciated in terms of office machinery.

Super-Cannes picks up where Ballard's previous novel, *Cocaine Nights* (1998), left off—but this time, instead of targeting a retirement community on Spain's Costa del Sol, Ballard has trained his sights on a high-tech business park, Eden-Olympia, overlooking Cannes. Especially amusing is his non-stop homage to the French Riviera of

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writers past. Particulars on Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald's high life there, for instance, make it clear that *their* Côte d'Azur is as remote from Ballard's brave new corporate world "as the casino at Monte Carlo was from the temple of Karnak." After all, in Eden-Olympia—where "work is the new leisure"—who has time for the beach? For all its tongue-in-cheek humor, an urgency underlies this cautionary tale about the corporate-political power vacuums that emerge when people are so consumed by their jobs that they have no time left for social connection. *Super-Cannes* may spell out a few of its points too starkly, but it has plenty of piety-blasting fun along the way. —MICHAEL UPCHURCH

Considered by many of his contemporaries to be the embodiment of Castiglione's ideal courtier, cultivated, gallant, gracious, and honorable, Philip Sidney enjoyed an even greater posthumous reputation, not only as a gifted poet but also as a hero of English



**PHILIP SIDNEY:
A DOUBLE LIFE**

by Alan Stewart
St. Martin's/Thomas
Dunne, 412 pages,
\$26.95

Protestantism. He was born shortly after the beheading of his maternal grandfather, his uncle, and his uncle's wife, Lady Jane Grey, whom the Protestants had hoped to install as Queen in place of the Catholic Mary. He died at not quite thirty-two, of a wound sustained while fighting Spanish forces in the Low Countries. The first biographical treatment of his life—by his adoring friend Fulke Greville, who was not actually present at the scene—had the wounded Sidney giving his water bottle to a dying soldier with the soon legendary words "Thy necessity is yet greater than mine."

In the course of his research, Alan Stewart tells us, his initial distrust of the Sidney hagiography gave way to a growing realization that Sidney actually *was* a hero—and not just in England but in the rest of Europe, where he won the friendship and esteem of humanists, scientists, diplomats, and statesmen, particularly (though not exclusively) those engaged in the cause of religious freedom for the beleaguered Protestants.

ANSWERS TO THE NOVEMBER PUZZLER



"Full Course"

The food chain in the shaded circuit could be said to describe a full-course meal, from "soup" to "nuts." Across: 1. BAR + ROW 5. B + RACE 9. RUSE (homophone) 10. TEAR GAS (anag.) 11. S(MALL) TALK 13. SHE + A 15. T(RUM)AN 17. ALGAE (anag.) 20. NE + X + US 22. FIR(M)ED 29. DUMA (hidden) 30. MOS(QUITO)S 31. E + UTERPE (repute anag.) 32. L + ONE 33. STYLE (homophone) 34. EN(SUE)D Down: 1. BRAS + S 2. AU + THOR 3. RE(M)AP 4. WELL (double def.) 5. B(A + LB)OA 6. A + GAIN 7. C + ALI + BAN 8. ESKER (anag.) 12. AS + SAD 14. PO(P)LAR 16. MO(U)TH 18. FEE + LOUT 19. HI + TIT 21. S(UT)URE 23. (V)ERMIN + E 24. RIME'S 25. T + A + STY 26. IDOLS (anag.) 27. FAZED (homophone) 28. PI(P)E

Indeed, during his brief lifetime he was in many ways more admired on the Continent than back home at the court of Queen Elizabeth, who was far more reluctant than Sidney to commit English monies to the defense of her allies and whose complicated relationship with Sidney's powerful and ambitious uncle, her on-again, off-again swain Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, seemed to render her intermittently suspicious of the whole Sidney-Dudley clan.

Having mined much in the way of archival material, Stewart illuminates court life and diplomacy in Sidney's time and the constraints under which he operated. The most serious flaw in this otherwise estimable biography is that it neglects what Sidney valued so highly: the interior world of the poetic imagination. Or, as Sidney put it in his "Defence of Poesie": "Neither philosopher nor historiographer could at the first have entered into the gates of popular judgments, if they had not taken a great passport of poetry ... Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry as divers poets have done ... Her world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden." —MERLE RUBIN

Sensitivity is a quality we tend to associate with those whose socio-economic status enables them to lead relatively sheltered lives: people who have the freedom to cultivate their sensibilities, the time and space to notice fine distinctions and pleasant nuances.

The heroines of Sigrid Nunez's fiction, like Nunez herself, have come up the hard way, from a world of urban poverty in which there is very little to cushion them from the harsh necessities of just getting by. Nunez's heroines nevertheless bear a surprising resemblance to Anita Brookner's: they are delicate, even timorous women, given to solitary, ruminative walks through city streets. Yet they show astonishing courage when contemplating the depths of loneliness that are inseparable from the human condition.

The narrator of *For Rouenna* is a



FOR ROUENNA
by Sigrid Nunez
Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 208 pages,
\$22.00

middle-aged woman novelist, presumably Nunez herself. As the story opens, she has just broken up with her boyfriend and is living alone in a building full of women and cats. She has also received a letter from a woman who has read one of her books, Rouenna Zycninski, whose name doesn't ring a bell at first, although they grew up in the same Staten Island housing project. After some hesitation the narrator gathers up the courage to accept Rouenna's invitation to meet. In many ways the two couldn't be more unlike. Rouenna, a former Army nurse who served in Vietnam, claims to have no use for "sensitive plants," which this narrator certainly is. The narrator moves in literary and artistic circles, whereas Rouenna seldom even reads a book. Yet a bond develops between them. And although the narrator is taken aback by the suggestion that she, a writer, might want to help Rouenna tell the story of her Vietnam experiences, this is exactly what she ends up doing. Her initial ambivalence toward Rouenna is superseded by a determined, self-effacing effort to tell Rouenna's story as Rouenna herself might have done.

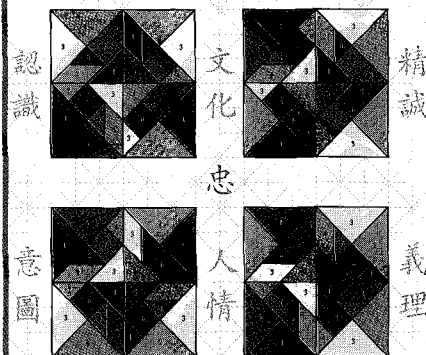
Nunez's outstanding quality as a stylist is her transparency. There is a conspicuous lack of pretension about her writing, a refreshing earnestness. Reading her, we feel that everything is out in the open. But in her case transparency does not go hand in hand with a simplistic world view. Rather, it is her poignant sense of the complexity of human life that impels her to write as plainly and directly as possible, reminding us that those who live in the gritty world of housing projects, or even amid the apocalyptic horrors of war, are as sensitive as anyone else. —MERLE RUBIN

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BY CAITLIN FLANAGAN

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In America we have a tradition of sending curious and entertaining phenomena—Tutankhamen's treasures, the Ice Capades—on national tours, so that everyone can get a look-see. Currently making the rounds are Jackie Kennedy's clothes. That the tour's venues include some of our nation's most highly regarded art museums (its Washington port of call is not the Smithsonian, which houses a collection of First Ladies' inaugural gowns, but rather the Corcoran Gallery of Art) seems to have created a measure of anxiety in certain of its organizers, who have produced a catalogue full of serious essays intended, one can't help suspecting, to lend substance to the proceedings.

Philippe de Montebello, the director of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, kicks things off, and he's all business. The collaboration between his institution and the John F. Kennedy Library and Museum (which owns the clothes) has resulted in "a fruitful sharing of methodologies and interpretations." Caroline Kennedy contributes a characteristically gracious letter, one that perfectly embodies her mother's dictum of giving the press "minimum information ... with maximum politeness," and Arthur Schlesinger Jr. reports for duty uncomplainingly, firing up his computer and punching out several thousand words on "Jacqueline Kennedy in the White House." Next up ought to be Letitia Baldrige, but she is curiously absent, perhaps because she recently pawed the same ground in *In the Kennedy Style*. In her stead we get a not unappealing understudy, Rachel Lambert Mellon, the former First Lady's friend (she redesigned the White House Rose Garden for the Kennedys), who sweetly stamps her foot over the many "made-up, untrue fantasies" that have tarnished her patron's legend. The final

JACQUELINE KENNEDY:
THE WHITE HOUSE YEARS
SELECTIONS FROM THE
JOHN F. KENNEDY
LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

Compiled and edited
by Hamish Bowles

Bulfinch Press, 198 pages,
\$50.00

hurdle is "Defining Style," by Hamish Bowles (he seems to think that Jackie's greatest adversary was perhaps not Lee Harvey Oswald but rather Mamie Eisenhower, who spent her tenure as First Lady stinking up the White House with her tiki sofas and potted succulents and "department-store furnishings"), and then—at last!—we're on to the clothes. They're disappointing.

Displayed on limbless mannequins, photographed against a gray background under clinical lighting, they have an embalmed quality. Although the word most commonly associated with Jackie Kennedy's sense of style is "timeless," the clothes seem anything but; they suggest several decades' hibernation in the cedar chest of a fashionable granny. A few pieces transcend their unforgiving presentation. A black Chanel suit (lined, in the customary manner, with the same fabric used for its blouse, in this case dot-embroidered ivory silk satin) captured my immediate attention—but not because of the lesson Montebello hopes it might impart on "an aesthetic response to the highly public and ceremonial role of first lady." Rather, because it's smashing, something I'd like to have in my closet for a fancy lunch out. The evening gowns look best, particularly those by Oleg Cassini: long, sleeveless columns of uninterrupted color. But many of the clothes look fusty, even—how can this be?—dowdy. There's a Givenchy dress and overblouse in gray wool jersey that, the catalogue informs us, achieves an "effect of absolute sim-

plicity." Truer words were never written; it looks like something a nun or a prison matron might wear. The tidy suits and coats, constructed of nubby wool, look nice but unremarkable, more like the typical stewardess uniforms of the day than like couture. The hats, floating jauntily in midair like the Invisible Man's telltale fedora, look ridiculous.

Ultimately, the effect of the collection is dispiriting. For all that we have been instructed to regard this exhibit as an opportunity to view "the originality and workmanship of some of the best designers of the day," what we hope these clothes will do is perform a powerful act of evocation, and the person we want them to evoke is not Cassini or Chanel but, of course, Jackie herself. Her clothes manage to suggest less than nothing about her.

No matter, because each of the bloodless specimen photographs is accompanied by pictures of Jackie actually wearing the clothes, and—my God—she looks sensational. Every piece is transformed. The Oleg Cassini suits, whose dimensions (enormous buttons, huge pockets) make them look slightly childish on the mannequins, assume the

most sophisticated proportions when set in the context of vast tarmacs and high-ceilinged state-rooms. (Cassini was once a Hollywood costume designer, and he brought to his couture a cinematic sensibility that was perfectly in sync with the Kennedy master plan, in which photographs of the beautifully dressed family at work and play had been regularly offered to the public since the days of Joe Jr.'s infancy.) In a photograph of Inauguration Day, Lady Bird Johnson's hat, with its net veil,

looks positively geriatric next to Jackie's cream-colored semi-crown. (Clutching her mink, grizzled and glowering, poor Lady Bird looks like a troll beside her pretty young companion—but, of course, her highway beautification campaign would eventually do more to improve



PHOTOGRAPH BY MUSEUM OF ART/JOHN F. KENNEDY LIBRARY, BOSTON



the aesthetic dimensions of American lives than all of Jackie's Chippendale highboys and "tastefully designed vitrines" and glittering nights at the White House put together.) Even the prison matron's dress, perfectly accessorized with a large brooch and Richard Nixon, is a knockout.

I will confess that when it comes to looking at pictures of the Kennedys, I fall into a kind of stupor, and everything I know about the bad marriage and the political misdeeds (of the Cuban missile crisis, Christopher Hitchens is said to have remarked that like many people, he would never forget where he was and what he was doing when President Kennedy tried to kill him) flies out of my head, the way the times table used to the moment the test paper was set down on my desk. There's a full-page photograph in the catalogue of the cou-

ple and their daughter in pre-White House days. It's early morning; mother and child are dressed for a photo op, father is dressed for the Senate, and they're all standing at the open door of the Georgetown house. The light in the street is intense, the foyer shadowed and inviting. The editors of the catalogue want my attention focused on Jackie's asparagus jersey suit, but my attention is not focused on Jackie's asparagus jersey suit; it's riveted on the way the baby is reaching for her father and her parents' shadows are falling on the gleaming floor. I've read chapter and verse about the President and his women, but show me a picture of Jack and Jackie in a convertible, dressed to the nines, her hair blowing loose in the wind and her husband reaching across to lift a strand of it behind her ear, and I'm sunk. It is impossible for me to look

at these pictures and not impose on them the exact sort of narrative that inspired the family to make themselves so available to photographers in the first place.

The cotton is high these days for unreconstructed Jackie fans. The clothing exhibition has brought us a new flood of hagiography, mostly in the form of picture books, such as Jay Mulvaney's *Jackie: The Clothes of Camelot* and Pamela Clarke Keogh's *Jackie Style*. It's best to stick to the transfixing, luminous photographs in such books, and not dwell too long on the text. Keogh's is chock-full of the usual claptrap: Jackie was a "breath of fresh air," the "creator of Camelot." The author believes that "although her life can be seen as one continuous act of courage, more than anything else, Jackie is associated with style." The part about "one continuous act of courage" is so silly that it hardly bears consideration (although striking the set of *Camelot* and putting up *Zorba the Greek* in its place certainly required a measure of pure pluck). But associating her most closely with her "style," in any sense of the word, seems wrong also. To me, her life is most "associated" with the way she conducted herself during the days following her husband's murder. For people of my generation (I was three when John Kennedy was killed) it's difficult to have any authentic response to his assassination and to Jackie's behavior afterward, because the whole thing has been so endlessly interpreted for us by our parents' memories and by countless books and movies and television shows. We know that it was "shocking" because we are told that it was; but for us, really, it wasn't. After all, the first thing we learned about JFK was that he had been assassinated. It's one of the immutable truths of our childhood. The series of images used to telegraph the events—Jackie scrambling up and out of the touring car, standing stoically beside LBJ on *Air Force One*, appearing beside the casket in glamorous widow's weeds—has the predictability of the events of Holy Week. For anyone more interested in Jackie's "style" than in her "courage," her appearance at her husband's funeral in a sheer black mantilla, her children beautifully

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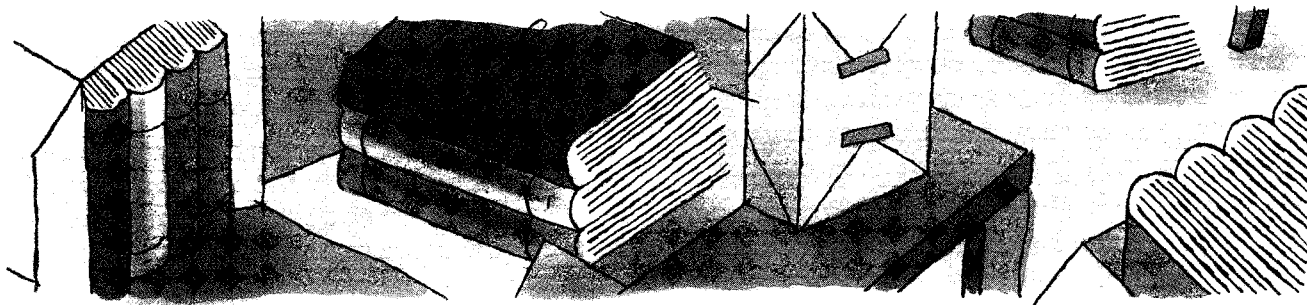
turned out in their good winter coats and shined shoes, may seem like a triumph of fashion over rotten luck. But in fact her every decision about those events came hard on the heels of horror on an epic scale, horror that is only hinted at by the memories of, for example, Nellie Connally, who was in the jump seat across from the Kennedys, and who described the moment the second bullet hit the President: "I felt something falling all over me," she told the Warren Commission. "My sensation was—buckshot."

In an instant of pure and almost unimaginable carnage, Jackie Kennedy lost her husband, her job, and her house. Certainly, two of those losses were mitigated by her wealth: the job was an unpaid diversion rather than an economic necessity, and the house was quickly exchanged (after a brief kip at Averell Harriman's Georgetown home) for a series of glamorous houses at drop-dead addresses. Nonetheless, the life that she had lived was ripped away so completely and so roughly that she could have been forgiven almost any response. Yet at every turn she did the right thing, and not always because the cameras were watching. Days after burying her husband, she returned to Arlington Cemetery in the dead of night so that their two children who had not survived—Arabella, who had been stillborn, and Patrick, who had died a few days after birth, might be reburied next to their father. ("He seems so alone here," John Kennedy is said to have told two friends who visited Patrick's grave in Brookline, Massachusetts, with him.)

For the cynical, the entire Kennedy enterprise is a kind of all-you-can-eat buffet of hypocrisy and untrammelled personal ambition, and in this construct Jackie's composure at the time of the assassination was the result of her considerably cooled ardor for her husband. But in fact her actions at the time—and at so many times in her life—resist easy and inflexible interpretation. For example, during the long, rambling interviews that she granted William Manchester not long after the assassination (their taped voices are punctuated by the rattle of ice in glasses and the lighting of cigarettes), she told him that before leaving Parkland Memorial to board *Air Force One*,

she freshened her lipstick. Later she greatly regretted this confession, and begged (in fact, sued) to have it omitted from his account; however, it came to light—and now we can bring to her small gesture the full force of our feelings about her: Did she freshen her lipstick because she realized that she was moments away from the greatest photo op of her life, and didn't intend to look washed-out and cuckoo, like Mary Todd Lincoln? Or was she hewing to old-fashioned notions of decorum and propriety in the face of a national disaster in which she had just figured prominently? We will never know.

"For four days in November," writes Pamela Keogh, whose book is marked by a truly impressive reluctance to break new ground, "Jackie's public dignity held the country together." This sentiment is so uniformly expressed in biographies of Jackie Kennedy that it must be a prerequisite for a publishing contract. The more thorough biographers give credit for the idea to its originator: Donald Spoto, for example, the author of *Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis: A Life*, says, "De Gaulle was right: she did indeed teach the world how to grieve." But it was another of De Gaulle's remarks that was on the money: Jackie, he said, "gave the world an example of how to behave," and he was precisely right. To respond to personal catastrophe with public dignity—as have so many people this fall—represents human conduct at its most impressive. Her behavior during those four days, derived from the old values of forbearance and restraint, was girded by a kind of internal fortitude that was not at all in conflict with other aspects of her character—aspects that many of today's feminists would lambaste as pathetic and weak. ("Her instincts were completely feminine," William Manchester wrote of her; "if she met your plane at the Hyannis airport, she automatically handed you the keys to her convertible.") The ways in which she allied her matchless femininity—which only a fool would believe she deployed naively—with her tremendous strength are central to her intrigue, and they are why, so many years later, so many people will turn out to see a few dozen coats and dresses and pill-box hats. ▀



BOOKS

(SOME OF) THE BEST BOOKS OF 2001

Suggestions for getting and giving

BY BENJAMIN SCHWARZ

.....

More books for review are sent to our offices in a week than the magazine has space to cover in a year, which means that we're constantly culling. Here are some principles that guide our choices. We are, of course, looking for the great books that deserve our readers' attention. Some might be otherwise neglected—the mesmerizing debut novel that the literati aren't talking about, the dazzling memoir out of print for decades, the obscure work of sociology so bold in its approach that it redefines the way its subject is understood. But we also want to help our readers decide which highly publicized books are worth their time and money. Moreover, we hope to keep readers abreast of significant scholarly debates, even if a book defining one of those debates is clumsily written and, we believe, completely wrong (reading brisk book reviews can be a painless way to understand the arguments in "important" books you'd rather not read). We also want to assess for our readers popular books that have few if any literary or intellectual pretensions, because we believe that such books can illuminate meaningful aspects of the nation's social and cultural life. And we want to tell our readers about sharp, clever books, utterly lacking in gravitas, that we know will delight them on the beach or the bus. (Further, "The Editors' Choice" each month is the one book in that issue that we think is most likely to appeal to our readers.)

The following is a list of books, most

but not all reviewed in our pages, that we believe are among the best published in 2001. Although we stand by our choices, we've undoubtedly overlooked some extraordinary titles. We offer this selection to help our readers in their holiday book buying.

FICTION

The Hiding Place, by Trezza Azzopardi (Atlantic Monthly Press). In sentences that lilt and caper Azzopardi renders her story of a loss-filled childhood in the gritty Cardiff docklands at once horrifying and lovely. This first novel may well be the best of the year.

The Peppered Moth, by Margaret Drabble (Harcourt). Burrowing under the present and layering her story with metaphor, Drabble explores the persistence of the past. Remarkably, although this clear-eyed novel probes a daughter's despair over her mother's severe depression, its perfectly sustained tone expresses humor without poking fun, and regret without sentimentality.

The Corrections, by Jonathan Franzen (Farrar, Straus & Giroux). If this novel were half as good as the hype would have it, it would be an extraordinary work. It is both. Overstuffed and at times silly, it is also a funny and deeply affecting portrait of an American family.

Eva Moves the Furniture, by Margot Livesey (Henry Holt). With precision and discipline Livesey builds a perfectly structured novel about an intense and sometimes inconvenient friendship between the living and the dead.

The Island: The Complete Stories, by Alistair MacLeod (Norton). MacLeod's "complete" stories number only sixteen, which is understandable though unfortunate, since nearly every one of them is flawless. In stark and cadenced sentences he depicts the hard people and fierce beauty of Nova Scotia's Cape Breton Island and pieces together sad, often violent stories (no writer has better captured the love and brutality with which people treat animals) that are at once wrenching and idyllic, harsh and tender.

Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage, by Alice Munro (Knopf). This collection amply demonstrates that there is no greater living writer than Alice Munro. (See the review in this issue.)

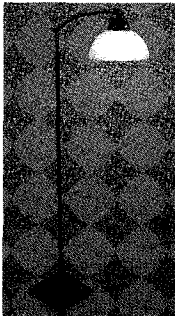
Novels 1930–1942 and *Novels 1944–1962*, by Dawn Powell (The Library of America). With the publication of these volumes Powell, who could write novels both of cynical wit and of romantic longing and regret, has finally won literary canonization.

Empire Falls, by Richard Russo (Knopf). In this comic novel set in a down-at-heel Maine mill town, Russo is as adept at subtle social delineation as he is at creating his passive, melancholic, yet compelling protagonist.

Back When We Were Grownups, by Anne Tyler (Knopf). A moving exploration of the life of a fifty-three-year-old woman who suddenly discovers that "she had turned into the wrong person," Tyler's novel of forbearance is a gentle masterpiece.

The Collected Stories of Richard Yates (Henry Holt). In these tales of loneliness and self-delusion Yates treats his characters with enormous compassion while unsparingly dissecting their weaknesses. His are among the most superb stories of mid-twentieth-century America.

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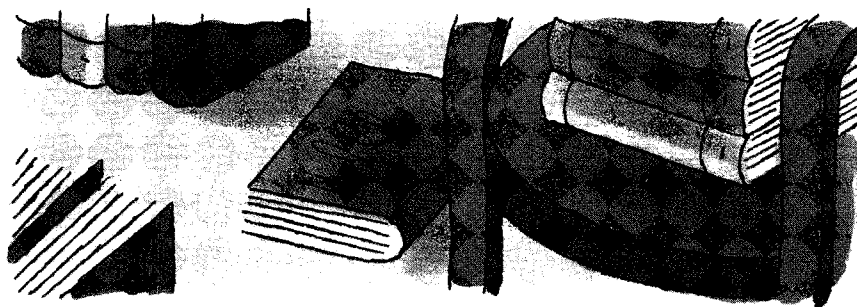


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NONFICTION

London: The Biography, by Peter Ackroyd (Doubleday). With panache Ackroyd hopscoches through the centuries in an exuberant, eccentric, complex, and occasionally exasperating portrait of a great, if sometimes sinister, city and its people.

The War Against Cliché, by Martin Amis (Talk/Miramax Books). Most of the essays in this huge and admittedly uneven collection relentlessly, eloquently, and with enormous intelligence support Amis's contention that style "is not something grappled on to regular prose; it is intrinsic to perception."

The Waning of the Renaissance, 1550-1640, by William J. Bouwsma (Yale). Bouwsma argues elegantly that the liberation accompanying the Renaissance engendered an intellectual reaction characterized by pessimism, doubt, and anxiety. By placing the intellectual history of the Renaissance in the context of a continuing struggle between freedom and order, Bouwsma fundamentally challenges a progressive interpretation of Western history.

Bing Crosby: A Pocketful of Dreams—The Early Years, 1903-1940, by Gary Giddins (Little, Brown). Giddins's lively and perceptive combination of history, biography, and musicology illuminates nothing less than American popular culture in the first four decades of the twentieth century.

Alexander Hamilton, Writings (The Library of America). For better or worse, Hamilton's vision of America triumphed, and it is simply impossible to understand this country without apprehending his mind. Readers can now do so with this comprehensive, intelligently selected, and accessible collection of the works of the most brilliant and far-seeing of all the Founding Fathers.

Unacknowledged Legislation: Writers in the Public Sphere, by Christopher Hitchens (Verso). A collection of subtle (a word usually, if unfairly, missing from descriptions of its author), generous, and deeply learned essays on an amazing range of literary figures, written with brio and precision.

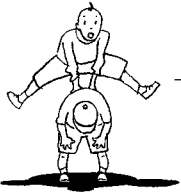
France: The Dark Years, 1940-1944, by Julian Jackson (Oxford). In the most complete and careful history to date of occupied France, Jackson unflinchingly explores the complexities and moral ambiguities of his subject.

The Danger Tree, by David Macfarlane (Walker). This gripping and elegiac memoir of a Newfoundland family, centering on its experiences in the Great War, makes felt the weight of the past on the present and of great movements in history on the lives of individuals.

To Keep the Ball Rolling: The Memoirs of Anthony Powell (Chicago). Powell's complete memoirs have long been out of print, and this abridgement, published in the United States for the first time, is a window onto his masterpiece, *A Dance to the Music of Time*. Among portraits of twentieth-century British literary life this is perhaps the wittiest and most keenly observed—and certainly the finest-written.

Boswell's Presumptuous Task, by Adam Sisman (Farrar, Straus & Giroux). A sparkling portrait of a literary artist, and a penetrating assessment of the greatest biography in English.

The First World War, Volume I: To Arms, by Hew Strachan (Oxford). "Definitive" is a much overused word, but this work merits the term. The first of a three-volume history that explores nearly every aspect of the war, from finance to ideology to diplomacy to armaments, it combines depth with staggering breadth, acute analysis with magisterial narrative.



THE PUZZLER

by EMILY COX and HENRY RATHVON

Presents

Ten entries in this puzzle (all of them horizontal) contain various “presents,” symbolized by gift boxes in the grid. Clues for these ten entries are given in random order; by identifying the “present” in each of their answers, solvers may locate their places in the grid. The Acrosses and the Downs are clued normally. Six clue answers, three of them among the Presents, are capitalized.

Last month's Puzzler solution is on page 144.

ACROSS

1. Survivor taking end of ribbon and opening (6)
5. Conceit in movie *Go* is metaphorical (6)
10. Dam breached by eleven high points (6)
13. Cat returned in the morning, optimistic (4)
15. New opera about one Midwestern town (6)
18. Note time past, disclosed again (6)
23. Down some brew in valley (4)
26. Fork in wide side street (6)
27. Playing duet, I'm boring character (6)
28. Audited those who plant trees (6)

DOWN

1. Finish raw novel by youngster (4,2)
2. Poem is rudely thrust upon others (6)
3. Flower occupies a place in light (5)
4. Love Kiss album containing “Island Primrose” (5)
6. Duds crow brought back (4)
7. Italian article, courageous one about American dream (8)
8. Criticize card player's feat (4)
9. Wetland plant absorbing radium in bog (6)
11. Brief but flashy error in turning to crime (8)
12. Born lazy, ruined brilliant display (8)
13. British prime minister with cavity on top of tooth (4)

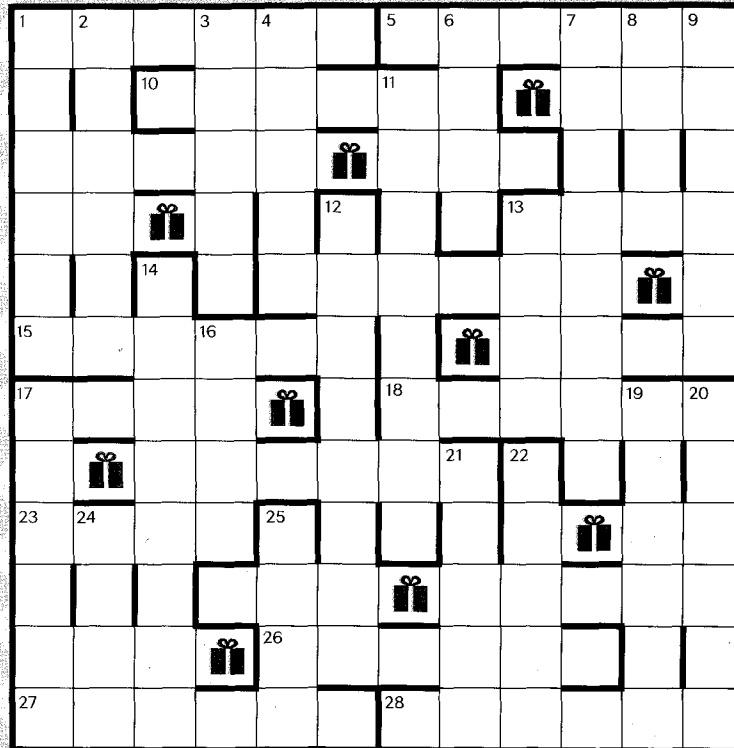
14. Worker devouring two thirds of omelet in nostalgic place (8)
16. Attended orthodox service (4)
17. Charge Bengali for one piece of toast (6)
19. Idle bottle of a certain size filled with oxygen (6)
20. Places to eat bananas in *Reds* (6)
21. Voiced shy pang (5)
22. Equally unhappy Syrian leader (5)
24. Something soothing in solo with no name (4)
25. Bovine involved in prize bullfight (4)

PRESENTS

- a. Evita regrets nuts in waffle (12)
- b. Mystery writer's enclosing buck for shipping charges (8)

- c. Guy referring to jerks and nonconformists (8)
- d. *Guys and Dolls* character pitching a no-hitter, and that's final (6,7)
- e. Put on a report connected with old Renaissance sculptor (9)
- f. Newcomer and I speak heatedly about debut of modern fighter jet (9)
- g. I bet splices changed certain votes (11)
- h. Running in Connecticut, finisher is top competitor (9)
- i. Cast worships real flower deliverers? (5,7)
- j. Leave stranded, in a way, single and without hope of success (4,2)

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 77 North Washington Street, Boston, Mass. 02114.





WORD FUGITIVES

by BARBARA WALLRAFF

The responses to the July/August request for “a word for an object that works only if one employs a trick known to its owner or frequent user” were all over the map, in both senses of that expression. Some readers suggested eponyms—in particular, the likes of *fonzie*, *fonzable*, and *fonzer*, all intended to evoke “the Fonz,” Henry Winkler’s character in the sitcom *Happy Days*, because of his ability to get the jukebox to work by giving it a whack.

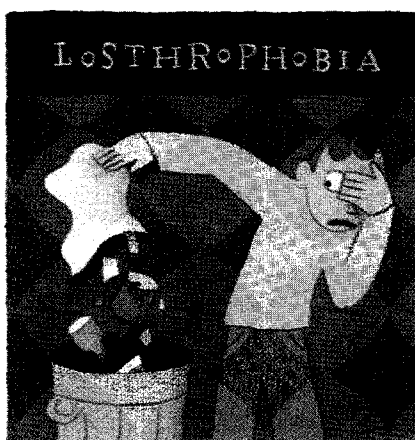
Evelin Sullivan, of Redwood City, California, who had asked for help in finding this word fugitive in the first place, wrote again to propose a coinage: *jiggliit*. A couple of people suggested *fuss-gadget*. Bob Israel, of Westford, Massachusetts, proposed *computer*, explaining, “I’ve never seen one that didn’t require regular trickery to keep it going.” Several people proposed *wife*, *husband*, or *spouse*.

Neologisms beginning with *thingama-* were popular—for instance, *thingamajigger* and *thingamabobject*. Ones beginning with *idio-* were more popular still, arriving from as far away as Karachi, Pakistan. Michael Mates, an officer at the U.S. Consulate General there, submitted *idiosynpractical*. Nifty word, but we were looking for a noun. Other readers sent in *idiosecretic*, *idiopathic*, *idiosymatic*, and—hooray, some nouns!—*idiosyncrathing* and *idiosyncontraption*. Top honors go to Arun Shankar, of York, Pennsylvania, for thinking along these lines but thinking a bit more, well, idiosyncratically than most, to arrive at *idiosynamajig*.

In response to the other July/August request, for a word to describe a “fear of inadvertently throwing something valuable out with the garbage,” many, many *phobias* arrived. Evidently the readers who sent them in suffer from neither *doxophobia* (fear of expressing opinions) nor *neophobia* (fear of anything new or novel), and some would even seem to be remarkably free of *catagelo-*

phobia (fear of being ridiculed). Jacob de Jager, of Bountiful, Utah, proposed *discardphobia*; Yvonne R. Freund, of Portland, Oregon, the hard-to-pronounce *dumphobia*; Elizabeth B. Chast, of Brooklyn, New York, the Francophilic *jeteraphobia*; and Walter F. Tanski, of Troy, New York, the Hellenologophobic (that is, evidencing a fear of Greek terms) *throwawayoopsaphobia*. Ivan Cooper, of Traverse City, Michigan, offered up a nice variation on the theme: *phthrobia*.

The apparently Hellenologophilic Crawford MacKeand, of Greenville, Delaware, proposed “the too-little-known



word *losthrophobia*.” He went on to explain, “That current editions of the standard reference works appear to have passed it over is unfortunate, as it brings with it an interesting history. Although folk etymology embraces an obvious derivation, it is of course to the classical Greek, and especially that of Homer, that we should turn for a full understanding. While Liddell & Scott’s *Greek-English Lexicon* offers us the Attic λῶστος, it is clearly to the Homeric λῶσθος that we should turn (*A Lexicon of the Homeric Dialect*, Cunliffe R. J., Blackie, London 1924). This had the well-established significance of ‘most agreeable’ or ‘most advisable,’ presumably identical to the unattested Koine word *λῶσθος. The

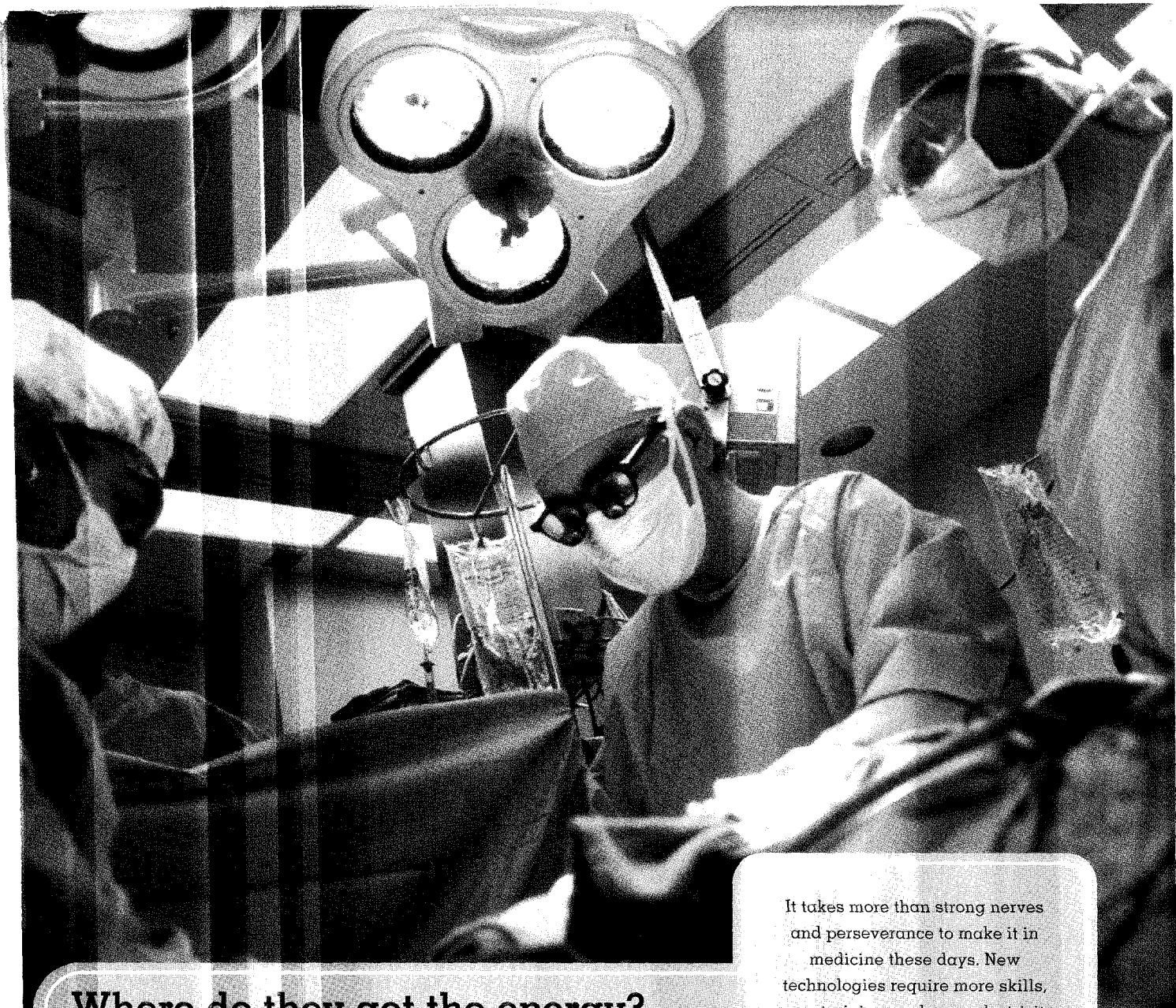
sense-inversion phenomenon in the English word is worthy of note, though not uncommon in derivative terminology, e.g. *longshanks* for a notably short person. A connection with loss, and with inadvertent discard, appears to have arisen at a relatively recent date, possibly even in our own century.” Never mind that according to a recent, highly diplomatic e-mail from Samantha Schad, Ph.D., the senior assistant editor responsible for the classical component of etymologies in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, this account amounts to a gossamer of information laid delicately upon utter nonsense. MacKeand takes top honors.

Now CROSS G. MOORADIAN, of Troy, Michigan, writes, “Surely, at one time or another each of us has bought or received a gift that, truth be known, the giver secretly hoped to take possession of for himself. I can’t think of a word for this kind of gift. Help.”

And DEBORAH REDDEN, of McDonough, Georgia, writes, “A friend has a habit of taking a lovely song and changing one or two words to make it vulgar—which he thinks is funny. The next time the song is played, I hear his crude version and not the actual rendition. Many of my favorite songs have been ruined in this manner. What would you call this? And is there a name for him?”

Send words that meet Cross Mooradian’s or Deborah Redden’s needs to Word Fugitives, The Atlantic Monthly, 77 North Washington Street, Boston, MA 02114, or visit the Word Fugitives page on our Web site, at www.theatlantic.com/fugitives. Submissions must be received by December 31. Use the same addresses to submit word fugitives that you’d like The Atlantic’s help in finding. Letters become the property of Word Fugitives and may be edited.

Readers whose queries are published and those whose words are singled out for top honors will each receive, with our thanks, a selection of recent autographed books by Atlantic authors. The next installment’s correspondents will be sent *Free Flight*, by James Fallows; *The Truth About Dogs*, by Stephen Budiansky; and *Drowning Ruth*, by Christina Schwarz.



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